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THE **Liguorian**

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR LOVERS OF GOOD READING

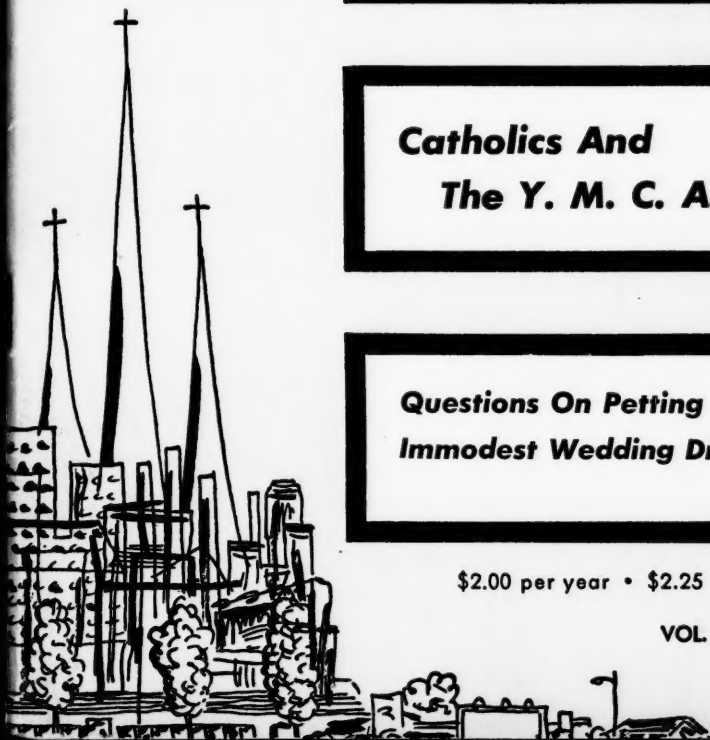
**How To Go To Hell
With Dignity** p. 1

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January, 1955

a magazine for the lovers of good reading



Devoted to the Unchangeable Principles of Truth, Justice, Democracy and Religion, and to All That Brings Happiness to Human Beings

How to Go to Hell With Dignity

The most terrifying feature of the disease of secularism is that it makes sinners content with their sins, so long as they retain their dignity before the world. Test yourself on this important matter.

Donald F. Miller

THERE ARE ways of going to hell *without* dignity. By dignity we here mean a kind of composure and respectability that result from the approbation and sometimes even the applause of a large part of the society in which one lives. Of course if you are bent for hell, the composure and sense of dignity with which you walk among your fellow-men will last only until you die. When you actually see the gates of hell opening before you, there will be little composure or dignity left in your demeanor.

But to get back to our first statement: it is possible to be on the way to hell even in this life without dignity or honor. If you are on the list of the nation's most sought after public enemies because of your open and vicious crimes, if you are known for your almost constant blasphemous and obscene language, for your open disregard of all laws of God and man, above all, if you have been found out to be a defrauder of widows and orphans, you are on your way to hell without dignity or honor from your fellow-man. Some people, most likely

members of the class of souls that are going to hell *with* dignity, will even say that they are glad that there is a hell to which you are going, and that the sooner you get there, the better it will be.

However, this meditation, or projected self-examination, is not to be concerned with the kind of sinners just mentioned, but rather with those who are moving along in life toward hell with great dignity, and without losing the respect of much of the world around them.

It is tremendously important for all Christians to ask themselves today whether they are going to hell with dignity. It is one of the cardinal principles of secularism that it is not so bad to do things that set one on the road to hell (according to no less an authority than Jesus Christ), so long as one does not lose respect and standing before one's neighbors, or, to put it still more simply, so long as one will be considered a lady or a gentleman by the world. Being a lady or a gentleman makes possible many genteel and dignified distractions and pur-

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suits; it offers opportunities for heart-warming diversions and even charitable deeds, such as working without pay for the success of a Red Feather drive, or providing baskets for poor families at Christmas. All such things tend to keep in the background the terrible fact that one is on the road to hell.

If it be objected that it is a cruel thing to frighten seemingly good people, people who are respected by the world, we can give two answers to the objection. The first is the fact that Christ Himself tried to save many of the highly respected people of His day by reminding them that they were on the way to hell. It was the social and religious leaders of the two cities of Capharnaum and Corozain, men enjoying the respect and honor of all their townsmen, whom Christ was addressing when He said that these two cities had been exalted unto heaven, but would be thrust down into hell. Before it was too late, Christ was trying to strip away the dignity that made it so easy for them to continue along the road to hell.

The second answer to the objection is the fact that, despite the world's attitude toward certain sinners, there is nothing doubtful or difficult to understand, for those who know Christ and His Church, about what puts a person on the road to hell. These are the principles that constitute the very essence of the teaching of Christ concerning hell:

1. Only they are condemned to hell who die with one mortal sin, or many mortal sins, unrepented and unforgiven, on their souls at the time of death.

2. A mortal sin is committed only when a person knowingly, deliberately, freely violates a serious law of

God.

3. What laws are serious in the eyes of God are known to individuals through the working of their reason and conscience in subjection to the teachings of Christ and the guidance and authority of His infallible Church.

In short, no one will ever be able truthfully to say, on being condemned to hell: "I was ignorant of the law of God. I had no idea I was committing a mortal sin." What we are talking about here is people who know they have done or are doing things that place them on the road to hell, but who walk the road without losing the honor and approval of the world.

Nor, let it be added, are we putting the finger on any individual, living or dead, by this analysis. Only God can judge individuals, even the Hitlers and Stalins and Dillingers, etc. Only God knows whether true repentance intervened before the death of a seemingly great sinner. Only God knows when a person is so mentally deficient as to be incapable of committing a mortal sin, a thing which cannot be done without sanity.

Nevertheless any individual can apply these Christian teachings and their applications to himself. The whole and only purpose of presenting them here is to encourage as many as possible of those "who are going to hell with dignity" to change directions immediately, by repentance, a good confession, and reform of their lives, no matter what the cost may be, or how great the disapproval of the world.

Here, then, are five common examples of how Christians living in the modern world can elect to go to hell with dignity.

1. *You hate a human being or a class of human beings, whom almost*

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everybody else in your social group hates, and you show your hatred by cruel, violent, unjust words and actions.

It may seem strange to suggest that this serious sin can be committed without loss of dignity. But remember, by dignity we here mean no loss of respect or approval from those around you. There is an example of hating with dignity, therefore of going to hell with dignity, being given in many quarters of the nation today.

Here it is. You say you are a Christian and a Catholic. You go to Church on Sunday, and receive the sacraments once in a while. You know you are bound to love all your neighbors, to forgive all your enemies, to do good to them that hurt you, as you hope for heaven.

But you live in a neighborhood that white people have built up. In building up the neighborhood, you and your friends have nurtured a secret prejudice against colored people. Up to now there has been little occasion for showing that prejudice. But now the colored have begun to move into your section of the city. Your whole neighborhood is up in arms. It is the opinion of the majority that the "d—d niggers" should be kept out, by violence if necessary. It is the popular and respectable thing, in your neighborhood, to join in whatever violent measures can be used to harass and persecute and insult and hurt any colored persons who come to live near you or even pass through the neighborhood.

So you join the angry mobs around homes bought or rented by the colored. You throw stones with the rest at the windows of the house. You threaten to beat up, or help to beat up, a colored person who passes by. You curse at colored children. You

threaten even the police who try to interfere with your violence and cruelty.

Many of your white neighbors pat you on the back. They encourage you to keep up the good work. You are respected. You have dignity and standing in your community. You continue going to church.

But you are going to hell, unless you repent and confess and reform.

2. *You have broken Christ's clear and severe law forbidding divorce and a second marriage after a first valid Christian marriage by which you are still bound.*

Here again the fateful point is that you can live in this great sin *with dignity*. There were very few people in the world, if any, who warned you against this sin when you were keeping company with a person you could not marry validly before God; rather, there were many who approved your finding a new love after the old had collapsed. There were dozens of persons authorized by the State, judges, justices of the peace, ministers of many denominations, to make quite a ritual out of your attempted second marriage. You could have all the flowers you wanted, sweet music, a dozen attendants, and any number of people to share your "wedding" breakfast and to act as if you were really married. You certainly entered this invalid marriage *with dignity*.

And now you live in it *with dignity*. You have an apartment or home that looks the same as that of any rightly married couple. You come and go, and people all call you Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So. You attend parties and functions together, and perhaps even go to church together and sit side by side like any real husband and wife. Your children are born to the plaudits and congratulations of most of the

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world around you. Nobody says an adverse word to you, except that now and then, when you bring up the subject of your spiritual state yourself, somebody suggests cheerily that you just keep on praying and everything will turn out all right.

But you are going to hell, unless you escape and repent of your sinful state before you die.

3. *You have adopted the practice of sinful birth-prevention in your married life and found that most of the friends to whom you speak of this quickly acclaim your prudence.*

You are fully aware that the Catholic Church, as the continuing and authoritative voice of Christ, the Son of God, in the world, tells you that birth-prevention through the use of instruments or medication, or through what is called withdrawal or "being careful," is contrary to the eternal and natural law of God. You have heard or read that Catholic married people may "control" the number of their children only by temporary abstinence from the use of the marriage right or by the use of rhythm when circumstances warrant it.

But you have decided that in this one serious matter you will not heed the Church nor Christ whom she represents. In all other things you want to be a Catholic. You have very definite convictions as to her being the true Church. You would not miss Mass on a Sunday. You go to confession quite regularly, but either without confessing this sin, or without really deciding with sorrow to give it up, which is as bad as not confessing at all.

With this sin you can live in great dignity, i.e., with the approval and the applause of many of those around you. It is not difficult to find other

Catholic wives and husbands who are living "with dignity" in the same habit of sin. They have many ways of encouraging you and of further dignifying your sinful state. Without looking for them, you will run across "Planned Parenthood" pamphlets and tracts that build up your birth-prevention into a great boon to society, and therefore to your own sense of dignity as well.

"Priests don't know what they are talking about when they say that our birth-prevention is a sin." "It is high time that the Church change her old-fashioned stand on this matter." "Parents should have only as many children as they can hope to raise and educate properly." "I know dozens of Catholics who go to the sacraments and are active in church-work who are doing the same things we are."

These and many other such defenses of your sin add to your sense of dignity. They make it possible for you to sleep peacefully, and to go about your business cheerfully, and to appear fashionably dressed and in an attitude of pious prayer, at Mass and even at the Communion rail.

But you are going to hell, unless you repent, confess, give up, and make atonement for this sin before you die.

4. *With a Catholic school within reasonable reach of your children, and no permission, direct or indirect, of your pastor or bishop to send them elsewhere, you enroll your children in a public school, or a fashionable but non-sectarian private school.*

Especially in the event that you are fortunate enough to be able to send your children to a costly and fashionable non-Catholic private school, does the element of "dignity" make it easy for you to live with your continuing disobedience to a serious law of the Church. Most of your wealthy friends

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have both set the example for you, and have highly recommended the school you have chosen. They help you decide on the secular high school and college to which your children will go. Publicity in the newspapers, announcing your children's entry into any activities at Harvard or Vassar will add to your sense of dignity.

There will also be an encouraging group of friends to lend dignity to your choice if you send your children to an ordinary public grade and high school. It costs so much more to send them to a Catholic school. And the public school is a so much nicer building, and has so many features that the Catholic school has not. Probably, too, the Catholic school is more crowded than the public, and you don't want your children to be neglected because they are lost in a crowd.

Many of your neighbors approve these and other reasons for your disobedience to the Church and even add other reasons. Your dignity is preserved; you are even praised and honored for being prudent and sensible and not hide-bound by "unnecessary" regulations of the Church.

But you are going to hell, unless you are humble and repentant enough to submit to the law of the Church, and to make amends for the spiritual harm already suffered by your children.

5. In the long gone past you made a bad confession by concealing what you knew was a deliberate mortal sin, out of shame and human respect. Since then you have continued to live and act as a loyal Catholic, but have never confessed that bad confession nor the sin that occasioned it.

No one but God knows about the secret sin that you have kept locked

up in your heart through many confessions and many years. Most likely it was a deliberate sin of impurity, committed alone or with someone else, in marriage or outside of marriage, because these are the most difficult sins to confess. Or it may have been a deliberate abortion, or a theft of a grave sum of money, or a serious injustice perpetrated against a neighbor. It is still on your soul, and you know that all your subsequent confessions and Communions have been unworthy and sacrilegious.

But you have not lost your dignity in the eyes of all your fellow-men, who know nothing about your secret sin. You may even have been chosen by them for positions of responsibility and trust, and may at times be pointed out as an example of an excellent practical Catholic. In this case the dignity you have attained not only softens the sting of remorse that sometimes assails your conscience, but it also makes it harder for you to face the suggestion of revealing your secret sin even in the darkness and anonymity of the confessional.

So you continue, with great dignity, to go through the motions of loving and serving God and being a faithful member of His true Church.

But you are going to hell, unless you use the grace of this reminder, or the grace of repentance that God will give you for the asking, to tell your secret past sin in a good confession, and the story of your life since it was concealed.

Not one soul described in this outline need go to hell at all. It is only necessary for anyone who is described in any of the points above to recognize the worthlessness of the dignity that has so far rendered it so easy for him to live in rebellion against God.

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It is only necessary for him to realize that there is only one kind of dignity worth possessing, even though the powers of this world scorn it and persecute those who possess it: the dignity of being a child of God, conscious of living in the state of grace, ready to suffer for the love of Christ.

Whatever dignity anyone possesses

in this life, at the expenses of the grace and friendship of God, will be transformed into everlasting shame, when, on the last day, all who have died in their sins will experience the fulfillment of these words of the prophet Osee: "They shall say to the mountains, cover us; and to the hills, fall upon us."

Far-off Christmas

Father James McSorley, O.M.I., suggests that Catholics cast a thought toward the wild places of the world as they walk home from Midnight Mass in their parish church, and join in spirit, the hundreds of missionary priests offering the Holy Sacrifice on Christmas morning, as they travel from village to village. Here is his Christmas in the Philippines:

"I left Dulawan by truck and was amazed at the speed with which we went. One of the boys proudly informed me that the driver had been an airplane pilot in the war and I'm sure that the truck would have taken off if it had had wings. At Midsayap, the Christmas decorations were literally out of this world. A realistic sky effect had been built in the church, in which they had planted not only a moon and stars, but a comet as well. Movable angels were suspended on wires so that they could be let down at the first notes of the *Gloria*. After hearing confessions here and inspecting the crib, we left for Batiocan for my own Mass. Here thousands were waiting, with bands playing and carols being sung. After hearing as many confessions as possible, the Mass began. The altar seemed to come alive, as curtains rolled back revealing a beautiful crib. Overhead amid the sounds of ripping paper, rose petals poured down out of a huge star suspended from the ceiling and floated over the sanctuary. At this point, a sharp blow on the head made me feel as though a new attack of malaria was on the way—but no—I had been struck by an angel. An angel, who was supposed to drop down from over the altar on a wire, and hang there, suspended over it. In measuring the length of the wire they had estimated on the height of a Filipino. That was the first—and so far, only—time I have ever been struck by an angel.

"After this Mass there was a wild dash for the next barrio. Pigacawan was a repetition of Batiocan, and from there a ferry tender who had to be roused from a sound sleep took us to Libungan. It was evening when I reached Caburyan and the people in this mountain retreat had built a little chapel since my last visit, complete with altar and decorations. It made a fitting close to the busiest Christmas of my life. No snow or spruce or holly was mine, but deep contentment in the privilege of bringing the Christ-Child to my people."

The Priest's Side of Confession

The predominant reaction of any priest to a good confession is great joy and thanks to God. Especially those who have need of a good confession should read this carefully.

Francis M. Lee

ONE of the most satisfying sounds in a parish missionary's life is the penitent's deep exhalation at the end of a difficult confession. One of these days, priest and penitent are going to stand up and give the unsuspecting congregation a few bars of the *Star Spangled Banner*, *Marsellaise*, *Deutschland uber Alles*, *All Hail to St. Patrick*, *Giovenezza*, or whatever other national hymn would seem in best cultural accord with the ebullience of a man or woman who has just shed twenty or thirty years of sin.

The confessional is a world all apart. Perhaps the great Catholic novel will never be written because this real arena of the Catholic's struggle and courage and failure and victory is sealed off. The priest is the lone spectator, and the fact that he must undergo death rather than speak of anyone's smallest fault is as much a part of his fibre as the ears by which he hears the fault. The confessional is frankly a world of high determination and sacrifice beyond the power of human clay, and it frankly demands a Power greater than the clay, and by that Power the penitent kneels there and talks.

Of course, the priest, hearing confessions, runs the proverbial gamut of emotions. A hidden movie camera might be interesting. It would catch his sudden smile, after he has listened to the sodden mistakes of the grown-ups for two hours, and now a little child comes in to have the wings dusted. A few minutes later, his face is contorted as he just slugs it out with the devil for the wavering soul behind the grill. Sometimes he loses, and it would be less than decent for a camera to record the naked helplessness in his face.

Because the confessional must deal with matters of impurity, some good souls may think that the priest is undergoing a recurrent series of electric shocks by hearing all that. Far from it, the priest immediately looks upon such things as past, and to be forgiven in a moment. His mind is running on to the future. He cannot prevent what happened in the past. It is over. But he has a very serious obligation to help the penitent make sure that it will not happen again. Together, they must campaign against the person, the place, the time, the opportunity that has been the spawning ground of this

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sin in the past. Together they must decide on the frequency of the sacraments and prayer that can create an adequate bulwark within the penitent. Don't worry about your past; the priest doesn't. Just straighten out that future.

A somewhat young priest can receive a peculiar type of shock. It all has to do with what is called "natural law." Now in the seminary classrooms, disquisitions, arguments, etc., if you could prove that some line of action was against the natural law, you won everything, hands down. Natural law was a colossal concept, the beyond which nothing. Murder, for instance, is against the natural law. In another sense, it would be against the natural law for a lady zebra to give birth to a squirrel. Things like that. If a line of conduct, or a phenomenon such as the zebra-squirrel, goes against the hard and fast lines that God dug into human nature or zebra nature, then the natural law is being offended, or in human life, transgressed against. And the natural law is unchangeable. It is much like the lines of longitude and latitude. If your town (and all towns are) is caught in a certain juncture of latitudinal and longitudinal lines, nothing can ever get it out.

Out of all of which, we may understand the young priest's dismay when he informs a penitent that birth-prevention is against the natural law, and his edict finds the penitent unimpressed and arguing still. We can also understand how much chance there is that the Church or the priest will ever have a change of mind in the matter. Less chance than the zebra having a baby squirrel.

But as a priest's years in the confessional go by, one thing he does well understand. The pattern of sin.

It is a very small pattern, being merely the reverse side of the coin impressed with man's major instincts. Self-preservation and race-propagation. Whenever man falls out of line and proceeds upon the fulfilment of these two major instincts in a disorderly fashion, all the major sins are committed right inside that small pattern. On Sunday morning man puts self-preservation by additional sleep before God-adoration in church; in business he uses sinful means to assure his self-preservation in the future; in swearing and cursing, he aggrandizes himself by belittling God, subjecting Him and His Holy Name to the inconvenience of the moment. Some cubit of joy is added to his emotional stature by slander, criticism, the belittling of others; some cubit of flesh is added to his waist by refusing to give up meat on Fridays. For a very good reason, we wish, in these lines, to narrow down the scope of sin.

Under the title of race-propagation come all the sins of sex. That needs no clarification. Birth-prevention, however, has the unique stigma of sinning in both areas. Herein the sinner frustrates the instinct to propagate even though using the act of propagation, and yet does it in the name of self-preservation, which by another name would be his new car, new home, or some other earthly gain left in the residue of his lust.

Sounding deeper the priest's attitude toward the confessional, be assured that there is real pity and anxious compassion in the heart of a missionary as he realizes that there are, in the congregation listening to him, sincere people who want to come back to God, but the mere thought of going back thirty years, lining up their sins and confessing them, is just too much. For just such people we write these

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words. For we insist that the pattern of sin is small and easily handled, and the greatest agony of hell, apart from being deprived of God, will be the realization that their confession could have been made in five minutes. Imagine regretting that for all eternity, as the millions of five minutes go by!

The point is this: you know your business; the priest knows his. Let us say that you are an auto-mechanic. Now, if I as a priest had to purchase a second hand car, and had myself to decide what shape it was in, across my mind would scurry a thousand cloudy things I had heard about camshafts, universals, filters, carbon on the valves, wheel alignment, governors, transmission pans, and the sump. Especially the sump. Whatever that is. All I could honestly do is open the door, count the seats, and buy it if there were two of them. But you, the mechanic, could tell me, in fifteen or twenty minutes, the whole picture. You have the master-copy in your mind. You know what should be there, what is missing. And now, just take that same idea into the confessional. Here is the priest's machine-shop, every week of the year. Perhaps in your mind the past seems an awful jungle, a hopeless jig-saw puzzle. But this priest has the master-copy right in his mind. He can put the pieces together, blindfolded; he knows what he wants, and will get it in five minutes, at the outside, if you will help a bit.

Trust your priest at least as much as you trust your mechanic. Trust him with your conscience, no matter the length nor the confusion of the years. After all, you are confused, not he. And who else cares about your conscience except the priest? Who else stands between you and God. He is the only doctor and your soul is sick.

He is your battler royal, he is on your side, and he is the one who gave up his life in the world to get you to heaven. He does not take your sins as personal affronts against him; you offended your Master, not the priest, and the priest is there as a channel of that Master's mercy and love for you.

And lest this all seem mere words, let us make up a confession for a person who has been out of the Church for twenty-five years. We are going to presume that he is sorry enough to quit the sins. How a priest loves to hear a person say, at the end of the confession, "Well, there it is, Father, and that's the end of that! I am through with those sins." And the priest loves it because, if there were any other attitude on the part of the penitent, there could be no absolution. Let us look at a good confession for such a man. We have insisted that the pattern is small. Now watch. Here are the chief points on which the ordinary sinner must examine himself.

1st commandment:

Has he denied his Catholic faith? enrolled in a non-Catholic sect or taken part in non-Catholic religious services? denied or argued against essential Catholic teachings? neglected prayers almost entirely? practiced superstition or belief in fortune-tellers?

2nd commandment:

Has he spoken contemptuously of God or saints or sacred things? seriously cursed a neighbor? sworn falsely? How often a month, week, day?

3rd commandment:

Has he missed Mass on Sundays or holydays of obligation without a serious reason? How often? Has he done unnecessary manual work on Sundays? How many Sundays and

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how many hours per Sunday?

4th commandment:

Has he gravely disobeyed and seriously grieved his parents? As a parent has he neglected his children's baptism or religious instruction? Has he, without his pastor's permission, kept his children out of his parochial school?

5th commandment:

Has he given in to serious anger, hatred, desire for revenge, against a neighbor? How often? Has he become intoxicated? How often? Has he had anything to do with promoting or causing an abortion, or the sterilization of someone?

6th and 9th commandment:

(He will begin by stating whether he is validly married, invalidly married, or single.) Has he freely indulged in impure thoughts, lustful desires? Has he taken part in obscene story-telling and conversations? Has he read bad books, attended evil shows? Has he committed unchaste actions, alone or with other persons, married or single, relatives or of the same sex? If married, has he practiced birth-prevention? (For any such sins, the average of times the sin was committed per month or per week or per day will satisfy the requirement of telling the number of times.)

7th and 10th commandment:

Has he stolen from others or cheated others out of material goods? What was the value of the unjust gain? Has he made restitution or determined to make it as soon as possible? Has he accepted stolen goods or helped others to steal?

8th commandment:

Has he told lies of grave consequence? Has he revealed secret serious sins of a neighbor? Has he slandered someone, or gossiped

frequently about priests, relatives, fellow-employees, neighbors?

Fast and abstinence:

Has he eaten meat on Friday knowingly and deliberately? How often? Has he neglected the fast prescribed on Lenten weekdays, ember days, vigils of certain feasts?

Church support:

Has he entirely neglected his duty of helping to support his parish? For how long?

I think one thing is clear. The greatest sinner in the world could sit quietly, read over this little examination of conscience, and be ready for a perfect confession in a very short time. And if a priest, any priest, should hear such a confession, he would be convinced that the penitent had a degree in theology.

Of course, an individual may fear that even though he lines up everything at home, he will forget it all in the confessional. And that is our very point. Every priest has this same bracket of sins **ALREADY IN HIS MIND!** He has the master-copy, and will go along just as you did at home with this paper. All that you will have to do is to answer the priest's questions and mention the approximate number of times any sin was committed. And that is not so much when the merciful Christ is willing to wipe away twenty-five years, or eighty.

One other note. If our problem is twenty-five years of concealed sins, then the system is just the same except that, in the beginning of our confession, we simply say, "I have been making bad confessions, Father, and will need some help." That is all, and believe me, you will have a very happy priest listening to you, and respecting you for your courage, and cheering you on, and helping to unravel the

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years of sin. After all, he wins, too.

Needless to say, gentle reader, the things we have brought to mind in these pages present a strong fare, and have not much to do with the people you see at the communion railing each Sunday morning. Perhaps only one person needs this, so that he may find his way back to that railing. If you are the one, know that the prayers of thousands go out with these lines. You are thought of in every Mass, every monastery, every convent. You are one of God's "ten most wanted." May His grace be strong in you. May you, like St. Augustine, find yourself disgustingly tired of waiting for yourself, and taking today in your two hands,

cry "Now!" Until the day that confession becomes for you, as Christ meant it to be, a deep-springing fountain of grace, under which His children ever play, constantly cleansed and refreshed.

When next you go to your church, look at the confessional and say, "My kind God put that there for me. He knew I would make mistakes, so He put it there for me. That is why it is there. For me, a sinner!"

And so, it is the most natural thing in the world to go right in and kneel down and say,

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."

"God bless you."

Priest's Christmas

Christmas belongs to all the world, for Christmas gave to all the world its Redeemer; yet it belongs in a very special way to Christ's priests. It belongs to them in a sense similar to that in which it belonged to Mary and Joseph on the first Christmas. That blessed night, Mary and Joseph had little else they could call their own save Jesus. . . .

The hands of a priest who is truly poor in spirit do not cling to the things of the world and so they are prepared to hold tenderly a poor little Infant come from heaven seeking His creature's love. Consecrated fingers that have disdained to clutch the passing dust of earth, thereby prove a more fitting cradle for the Christ Child as He joyfully enters into a priestly heart, which, in even the most exalted of saints, is still but Bethlehem's cave.

—*Emmanuel*

Protecting Christ

I have offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in all kinds of circumstances—in hovels, shacks and sheds, glad of a roof over my head, and always with great admiration at the humility of Almighty God and His great patience with His creatures. What does it matter if the messenger of Christ must dodge the persistent raindrops that fall with diabolic accuracy on his collar bone from the rusted tin roof overhead?

The great God comes down again in this stable, and it is with a fierce joy that the missionary protects Him from the wind and rain. If only it were as easy to protect Him from the malice and insults which He patiently endures on the part of His human creatures.

Bishop M. Niedhammer in *The Cowl*

Teen-Age Problems

Donald F. Miller

Questions on Petting

Problem: We are two teen-aged girls who would like your advice on the following questions: 1) What kind of a sin is petting? 2) Is thinking about petting the same sin as taking part in it? 3) Why is the desire for petting far greater in boys than in girls?

Solution: 1) If by petting you mean (as most teen-agers mean by the word) prolonged kissing and passionate embracing on the part of a boy and a girl, it is a mortal sin. The reason for this is very plain: The sixth commandment of God forbids the unmarried to indulge either in the direct and deliberate causing of sex-pleasure, or in such actions as by their nature are designed to arouse passion or sex-pleasure in one or both of the participants. Petting means doing things that naturally lead to indulgence in what is forbidden by the sixth commandment.

2) The law of God forbids us to think deliberately about actions that are forbidden if there is danger that the thoughts will lead to desire for the sinful action, and the desire to consent to the sin. In matters of purity deliberate thoughts about evil actions are forbidden because such thoughts commonly lead to strong desires and to consent to sin. This does not mean that you are guilty of sin by the very fact that a thought of something sinful comes to your mind. The thought becomes a sin only if it is willingly indulged and continued without opposition from the free will. No matter how evil may be the content of a thought that enters the mind, it is no sin if it is resisted by some definite action of the will, as by saying a prayer or trying to think of something else.

3) It is to be expected (and all teen-aged girls should be aware of this) that, in an age when much of the world has abandoned the ideal of purity, boys who have been infected with the spirit of the world will be very aggressive in trying to induce girls to cooperate with them in committing sin. In the natural preliminary steps to marriage, the boy or man is ordinarily the "pursuer" or the "proposer." Boys and men who have abandoned respect for God's laws naturally become the "proposers of sin" to the girls who go out with them. It is the task of every teen-aged girl to use both the natural modesty with which God endowed her, and the respect for God's laws that she cherishes, to resist the sinful advances of a boy-friend, and even to teach him the importance of avoiding serious sin.

Catholics and the Y. M. C. A.

Louis G. Miller

May a Catholic be a member of the Y.M.C.A.? May he support and contribute to its projects? May he use its facilities? In response to many such questions, here are our answers.

“FATHER, do you mind if I ask you a question?”

I was on a long journey by train, and having finished my breviary for the day, and taken a long look at the passing scenery (which on the prairies in any case is not too spectacular) I was glad of the diversion. My questioner had apparently been sitting in another part of the car waiting to approach me.

“Not at all,” I said. “Let’s have it.”

“I’m a Catholic, Father, and my question is this: may a Catholic belong to the Y.M.C.A.? If he may not belong, may he at least support its activities?”

“I would be inclined to say no!” was my reply.

“Well, it sort of puts a fellow on the spot,” my questioner went on. “There’s a new Y.M.C.A. building going up in my town — a recreation center. It’s being played up as a civic project, you know how it goes, let every civic-minded person put his shoulder to the wheel, and all that sort of thing. I’m a mainstreet businessman, and it makes me look narrow-minded if I don’t do my part. And yet I want to do the right thing by my faith. What stand should I take?”

I couldn’t give him a complete and

documented answer at the moment, but since then a certain amount of study and research have given me a little more insight into the matter. For my questioner on the train (if he should happen upon these lines) as well as for the many others for whom the question under discussion presents a practical problem, we submit the following for calm consideration.

First of all, so that we may not be accused of giving our own pet opinions in this matter, we should mention that the Catholic Church has expressed her mind in a decree of the Holy Office dated November 5, 1920. This decree, mentioning the Y.M.C.A. by name, warned the faithful against it, and exhorted bishops throughout the world to use every means to keep Catholics from joining it on the grounds that its fundamental principles lead to rationalism and indifferentism.

There are two facts which lie behind this condemnation, namely:

1. The Y.M.C.A. is essentially a religious organization;
2. A Catholic who subscribes to or supports the tenets of some other faith is in effect denying the truth of his own faith.

I can at this point almost hear the rustle of rising hackles on the part of

some as they read these lines. We ask such readers to be patient while we explain our meaning.

In regard to our first point, then, we say that the Y.M.C.A. is essentially a religious organization, and in proof of this statement we appeal to two authorities from within the Y.M.C.A. itself.

The first is Owen E. Pence, Y.M.C.A. Director of Records, Studies and Trends, contributor of a long essay on the association to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, the 1949 edition of which I have before me. He defines the Y.M.C.A. as an "organization composed of young men who are united together for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical needs of young men." He proceeds to give an historical account of its founding in London in 1844 by George Williams, whose purpose was to elevate, spiritually and morally, the commercial young men living away from home in the cities.

From the first, Mr. Pence goes on, the association emphasized bible studies and religious meetings and was "marked by an intense religious zeal." After describing the many and varied welfare activities the association has engaged in down through the years, he concludes:

"The religious spirit of the association has been dominant from the beginning. All welfare work for young men was conceived of as an expression of the religious spirit . . . this distinguished the association from boys' clubs, social settlements, boy scouts and many other agencies for the social betterment of young men."

Our second authority is Mr. C. Howard Hopkins, author of the comprehensive *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America*, published in 1951 by the Association itself with every evi-

dence of approval and benediction. From Mr. Hopkins we gain a little further insight into the Y.M.C.A. concept of religion. At the head of chapter nine, entitled: "The American Y.M.C.A. and the Christian Religion," Mr. Hopkins inserts the following quotation, taken from the proceedings of the international Y.M.C.A. convention of 1869:

"In theory and practice the Y.M.C.A. recognizes the essential unity of the church of Christ, and is bound to extend the hand of fellowship, love and sympathy to all who, in accordance with the gospel, honor the head and who love the Lord Jesus, whatever their ecclesiastical name or the peculiarities of their denominational policy. The shibboleths of sects, the rules of church order and disciplines, the minor differences in creed must be ignored by us."

Could a clearer expression be found of the naive belief that all religions (even though they contradict one other) are equally good and true? Yet as the chapter unfolds we learn that this fine-sounding principle has in the Y.M.C.A. been interpreted somewhat more narrowly. We are told that for many years a "basic tenet" of the association was that it should function as a "mission of the evangelical churches to young men." Active membership was to be confined to evangelical church members, and, according to official interpretation, "we hold those churches to be evangelical which maintain the Holy Scripture to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Working as self-professed auxiliaries of the evangelical churches, the Y.M.C.A. active members were to promote lay missionary work, tract distribution, and mission Sunday school. They were to do this, it was

constantly emphasized, not as another denomination, but as a special agency of the churches evangelical.

Father Rudolph Bandas, in his booklet, *Modern Problems*, quotes in this connection an interesting statement made by the general secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in 1919:

"When President Wilson wired the Y.M.C.A. that the United States needed it in the war, before I paid any attention to athletics, to educational work, I proceeded to form a committee on evangelical work in the churches. The result was the evolution of a religious program. Prior to this evangelical work, the Y.M.C.A. had a few score of clergymen employed as secretaries. Now we have the direct leadership . . . of more than 200 clergymen, the leading clergymen of every denomination. We sent these 200 men overseas that the boys might hear the best preachers in the country. We sent five million copies of the New Testament to the allied armies. When the story of the war is written, if the Y.M.C.A., yes, and the Y.W.C.A., are not on record as the identified Evangelical church of America, then I and many others will hand in our resignations, for the Y will have lost its interest."

It may be objected that all of the above testimony applies to the Y.M.C.A. of a former generation, but that of late years the organization has begun to swing away from such a forthright expression of affiliation with a particular denominational outlook. It is indeed true that, as one reads the Y.M.C.A. literature, one can detect a definite trend towards a wider and less sharply defined religious basis. It was an inevitable development, for if the "hand of fellowship was to be extended to all," why should the Prot-

estant Evangelical tenets be held in such preference?

In the years following World War I this question was very much to the fore in Y.M.C.A. circles, with an increasingly strong tendency towards the "liberal" view of religion. At the very time the Y.M.C.A. general secretary, in the quotation just made, was in forthright fashion proclaiming the evangelical basis of the association, others were soft-pedaling that approach. Emmissaries of the Y.M.C.A. doing reconstruction work in Europe after the first World War made it quite plain that they proposed to give to youth, in addition to intellectual and physical training, "a spiritual education characterized by greater liberty of thought and a wide tolerance, above and apart from any church or creed."

Significantly, it was in Catholic countries that they felt chiefly constrained to "refine and purify religion," and lift it into the rarefied mists of super-denominationalism. It was precisely this sort of proselytizing (one can find no other term to apply to it) which brought forth the warning decree of the Holy Office in 1920.

"By the 1930's," writes Mr. Hopkins, "most of the leadership of the movement was committed to the liberal or modernist view of religion." He quotes in this connection one of the Association Bulletins issued in 1928: "As long as we must deal with living human beings, struggling to achieve character and satisfaction in a difficult existence, we can leave the search for absolute certainties to the philosophers, and try for ourselves in all humility to learn from experience what aspects of truth are most serviceable to those with whom we deal."

This is liberal religion with a vengeance, which can find no absolute certainties applicable to the problems of

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daily living. Still groping for a formula amid the churning mists of modernism, the Association in 1936 asked that a statement of purposes and aims be drawn up by three men "whose names were synonymous with liberalism, religious education and current Association teachings." As might have been expected, they made it clear that "while the Y.M.C.A. is not committed to any specific credal or social interpretation of Christianity, the movement is nevertheless devoted to such experimentation in personal and social living as may be carried out within the framework of what we call Christian."

What is more to our purpose here, this authoritative statement made it plain that "the C in Y.M.C.A. stands for a particular quality of the Young Men's Christian Association which is more than philanthropic or secular, i.e., it is a Christian association. . . . It is an interdenominational fellowship, as compared with the distinctive approach of various communions."

We are not surprised, in view of this statement, when Mr. Hopkins informs us that the Y.M.C.A. has for some years been a consulting member of the National Council of Churches of Christ and of the World Council of Churches, which latter, of course, represents interdenominationalism on an international scale. At one of these "ecumenical gatherings," as our Protestant friends love to call them, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury could testify, amid manifest approval on all sides: "The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. have achieved a reality of world wide fellowship while others knew that it was wanted but could not find it. . . . Since then this fellowship has become a living reality in the experience of the Christian church in all lands."

It has not been our purpose here to offer a critique of the Y.M.C.A. philosophy. Our object has been to determine whether the Association is primarily and fundamentally religious in its purpose. We think the evidence we have adduced establishes the fact that the organization, throughout its metamorphosis from Protestant Evangelicalism to modernist liberalism has kept before itself as its main purpose the bringing of religion into the lives of the young men it serves.

To resume now our main line of argument, and to give the second of our two main points: If the Y.M.C.A. is concerned primarily with inculcating specific religious concepts (whether Protestant Evangelical or "superdenominational"), it follows logically that a Catholic who supports or subscribes to this program is in effect denying the principles of his own faith.

There is a basic principle at stake here which the Catholic Church feels must never be sacrificed or compromised. Christ founded one Church. He gave that one Church authority to teach in His name, and He promised solemnly that His Church would never fall away from the truth. "The gates of hell," He said, "shall not prevail against it."

Now Catholics believe that their Church is the one founded by Christ, as it is obviously the only one which can trace its history to the time of Christ.

In the course of the centuries other churches have arisen, with teachings contrary to what is taught by the Catholic Church. To all of them the Catholic Church says: "I cannot sit down with you as an equal among equals, discussing revealed truth as if God had parcelled truth out amongst us. We cannot all be true, because truth is *one*, and our teachings are contra-

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dictory of one other. It cannot be that God backs all of us, because then you have a picture of a God Who contradicts Himself, speaking truth one moment and lies the next."

For the Church in general and for individual Catholics in particular it would be a sin against truth itself to support religious teachings they regard as false. To do so would be to reject the very basis of our faith.

The Catholic indeed is bound by the fundamental law of nature to exercise fraternal charity towards individual members of the Y.M.C.A., as he must exercise it towards all men. But exercising charity towards an individual is one thing; accepting and supporting a false philosophy is something else, and to do this latter in the very nature of things is to compromise the faith.

Let us attempt now to give answers to a few practical questions which might arise out of our discussion.

Is it wrong for a Catholic to take out a membership in the Y.M.C.A.?

The Association itself formerly made a distinction between *active* and *passive* membership. Active membership was reserved to the members of the Protestant Evangelical churches.

During recent years this test of membership has been removed, and it is asserted that a Catholic may now vote and hold office in the organization despite his Catholic faith. However, our investigations have convinced us that what has happened is not the complete removal of the religious test, but the substitution of a new kind of religion in place of the old. Religion henceforth, as inculcated by the Y.M.C.A., is to be on a "super-denominational level." But to attempt a religious approach to life which lumps all religions together as equally

acceptable, is by that very fact to put oneself in opposition to Catholic belief.

Our answer to this question would be that Catholics should not have any kind of membership in the Y.M.C.A., should not serve on its board of directors, and should not have any part in the management of its affairs.

May a Catholic contribute to a Y.M.C.A. project, for example, a community youth center?

In the light of everything said above, our answer would be in the negative. We say this with full realization of the problem set for the Catholic businessman, to whom appeal is made to support such a project on the basis of civic virtue. We think the Y.M.C.A. is not being fair if it plays down the religious aspect of its work in such an appeal, when in fact religion is primary and fundamental in its approach to youth.

May a Catholic boy attend a Y.M.C.A. youth camp?

No. Usually this will entail membership of some kind, but even if it does not, inculcation of the Y.M.C.A. "religion of the heart" (a descriptive phrase quoted approvingly by Hopkins) will be a source of danger to the child's faith.

May a Catholic use hotel facilities, swimming pools and gymnasiums operated by the Y.M.C.A.?

If no membership is involved, but merely a matter of paying a set fee for a specified facility, it would seem to us to be permissible. One has no obligation of inquiring into the religious background of a hotel-owner from whom he rents a night's lodging.

We have pondered long on this matter of Catholic participation in the Y.M.C.A., and the problems which it raises. We have felt such a discussion to be necessary, even though we may

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inadvertently offend the feelings of some of our readers. We state sincerely that we have nothing against the members of the Y.M.C.A. as individuals; we wish them good health and a sound conscience. But just as they have their religious beliefs, so also do

we Catholics. To attempt the melting down of these differences into a vague superdenominationalism is to breed indifference to all religion.

Truth *does* exist. It *can* be found. Our prayer is that all men of good will may find it.

Thoughts for the Shut-In

Leonard F. Hyland

The All-Important Resolution

The beginning of the new year is traditionally the time for making resolutions, which, alas, such is the weakness of our human ways, are oftentimes broken and cast aside almost as quickly as they are made.

However true this may be, there is one resolution which should be paramount for the shut-in at all times, and the new year is a good occasion for him to renew his devotion to it. We mean the resolution to cultivate the virtue of patience or resignation to God's will.

For the sick, this represents the most difficult and at the same time the most necessary of virtues.

It is *difficult*, because it calls for faith, deep faith, which will engender trust in God that He has a purpose in permitting sickness, even though that purpose is hidden from our human vision.

And the virtue of patience is *necessary* because without it the human personality can be soured and embittered by illness, giving way to feelings of frustration and despair, which cause a person to become a burden to those around him and much more so to himself.

In cultivating patience there are two factors to be kept in mind.

First, resignation to God's will may be joined, nay, *must* be joined, to reasonable effort to regain health, if possible. The care of a doctor, medicines of various kinds, ordinary care of a surgical nature—all these should be part of the picture, and in applying them, the sick person may hope sincerely for better health. But always this hope must be joined with a fundamental spirit of resignation to God's will. God knows better than we do what is good for our souls. Hence we should end every prayer with the proviso: "Not my will, but Thine be done!"

Secondly, there should be no discouragement at failing to reach the heights of perfection. Dark days will come along; faults of impatience will at times crop up. The shut-in should then humble himself in acknowledging his fault, and cheerfully start over in his efforts to reach his goal. God does not judge us so much by the success we achieve as by the efforts we constantly and sincerely make, and this is especially true, it seems to us, of the shut-in trying to cultivate patience.

Let this then be your chief resolution for 1955: I will try in every way to be patient and resigned beneath God's hand.

Sacrament for Sickness

Every Catholic should clearly understand and deeply appreciate the full meaning of the sacrament that Christ designed for serious illness and approaching death.

Ernest F. Miller

WHEN I come to die, above everything else, I want somebody to tell me gently yet firmly about the journey I am about to make. I want to be warned in good time. I do *not* want anybody around me who is going to say, "Cheer up, old man. There isn't a thing wrong with you that a little rest won't cure. You just lean back and go to sleep, you lucky dog, and you'll be as fit as a fiddle in the shake of a dog's tail." No, I do not want anybody like that at the foot of my bed as the darkness begins to descend upon me which, I hope, will be the prelude to the dawning of the light.

If a doctor is there, O.K. Doctors have their important place in life as well as at the end of life. If the doctor is my friend — and I have many friends in the medical profession — he can help me keep my wits in shape for the thinking I will be wanting to do before I lose my wits entirely. And he can talk to me while I await the coming of the Lord.

But the thing that I want most of

all in the declining moments of my human sojourn is the holy anointing — the sacrament of extreme unction. I am not so proud as to believe that the legs of my soul are stout enough merely through the training that I have given them to carry me over the last peaks that stand between me and eternity and over which I must climb without stumbling or slipping if I am to arrive home safely. I need help — all the help that I can get. And I know that that help is afforded me in the blessed anointing of the priest. I would be a fool if I did not take advantage of it. And my relatives and friends would be my greatest enemies if they refused to let me have it when actually it would be the only thing that could really help me.

There is more to extreme unction than ordinarily meets the eye.

When a bad accident, like a train wreck or an airplane crash, takes place here in America, the daily papers, in telling the story, invariably say that a Catholic priest hurried to the scene to administer the last rites of the Catholic Church to the severely injured and the dying. The daily papers never explain just what the priest does when he administers the last rites, or what these last rites are and what they are meant to accomplish. The whole thing is surrounded with mystery.

Whatever they are, they must be very important, for all Catholics want to receive them before they die. Priests will crawl into burning buildings and under over-turned locomotives and through heavy barrages of exploding shells (in time of war) to make sure that they do receive them. Priests are expected to risk their lives to give the last rites to dying Catholics. Thank God, not only do they risk their lives, but oftentimes they sacrifice them in order to fulfill this sacred charge. That

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is how important the priest considers the last rites to be.

It is not because priests are particularly heroic that these heroic deeds are done. Priests as a group of men are no more heroic than any other group of men. They too can be afraid. They do not give the last rites in the midst of serious danger because there is no danger great enough to scare or stop them. They give the last rites in the midst of grave danger because of the effects that the last rites can have upon a body that is dying and upon a soul that is about to enter eternity.

Jesus Christ instituted extreme unction (this is the principal part of the "last rites") as one of the seven sacraments when He was here on earth. There is no record in the Gospel of His institution of this sacrament. This does not mean that Christ did not institute it Himself. There are many things that Christ did during His life that are not recorded in the Gospels. But they are recorded in the other inspired books — in St. Paul or St. Peter or St. James. The epistles of the Bible are just as inspired as the Gospels. If extreme unction is explained in one of the epistles, it is because the apostles received it by word of mouth from Our Lord, and were told to teach it to the whole world. Extreme unction is clearly mentioned by St. James.

These are the words of St. James, found in Chapter XIV, verse 6: "Is any man sick amongst you? Let him send for the priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he be in sins, they will be forgiven him."

Could there be anything clearer

than that, as to what Christ wants the Church to do when her children are approaching the end of their life on earth? The Catholic Church has been anointing the dying from the very beginning of her history, which was the time of the apostles. Men like Tertullian, Origen, St. Ignatius, St. Augustine, and a host of other teachers and writers, all of whom lived during the first four centuries of the Church's existence, attest to the sacrament of the last anointing.

There was one Christian in the 4th century, Hypatius by name, who accomplished wonders of healing by applying a certain oil to the body of a sick man or woman brought before him. But when it came to the holy anointing of the dying, "he called the Father Abbot," as one of his contemporaries wrote, "for Hypatius was not a priest and the Father Abbot was."

Apparently there was a real distinction between what a layman could do for a dangerously sick person and what a priest could do. The oil used by the layman Hypatius and the oil used by the priest Abbot were two entirely different things. The former might have been like our use of Lourdes water today, while the latter was the sacred ceremony that could be carried out only by one empowered by God through ordination to do so.

What does extreme unction actually do? It does two things, as the text of St. James explains.

It can help the sick to get better. There is no promise that it will *always* help the sick to get better. Sometimes it will, for St. James says, "And the prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up." This is not merely a vague word of comfort, like that of the man who consoles his friend who has just been

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given the sad word that he is filled with cancer, with the statement, "Don't worry; you'll be O.K. In a couple of months you'll be as good as new." There is more to the promise of St. James than that.

Every doctor who has a sufficiently large practice to enable him to draw conclusions will assert that on more than one occasion a patient of his who was desperately ill and in an almost hopeless condition rallied amazingly after the anointing of the priest, and eventually recovered entirely. Such cases are a matter of record for anyone who wishes to investigate them.

Those who do not believe in extreme unction will say that all recoveries of this kind can be traced to suggestion or to mysterious natural causes that are as yet unknown. Let them. The Catholic Church knows that extreme unction can, if God so wills, cure an incurably sick man because she has the infallible Christ on her side who said, "And the Lord will raise him up." She is not surprised when the stories of cures come back to her. And she is not distressed when men rise up and deny the validity of the cure as something supernatural or due to supernatural means.

Extreme unction does more than occasionally cure the sick. It helps people to die in such a way as to be ready to go to heaven when God's judgment is over. This is the most wonderful thing that can happen to a man — to die without fear of the new world that lies just beyond the last breath and the final blessing.

There is little doubt in the assertion that the time of dying is the most vitally important in a person's life. It is a tremendously mysterious time. It means moving into a country about

which not too much is known. It means putting in an appearance before a court at which an account will be given of every thought, word and action of life. It means the beginning of an eternity of awful pain or an eternity of ecstatic happiness.

The big thing, the essential thing is to die well, that is, when it is all over, to be greeted with a smile by the powerful Master who is in charge of eternity. Extreme unction helps to bring this about. How? *Extreme unction can take away sin!* This is not an invention of the Catholic Church. It is the teaching of Christ, as reported by St. James. What does St. James say? "If the sick man be in sins, they shall be taken away from him." Does that mean that the sick man does not have to go to confession, that all he has to do is allow himself to be anointed? No. If the sick man can go to confession, he must go to confession. The anointing will do him no good if maliciously he refuses to go to confession. In fact, if a man refuses to go to confession when he can easily go, the priest is forbidden to administer the sacrament of extreme unction.

But here is the case of a man who *cannot* go to confession. He intended to go to confession, but before he could do so he had a heart attack. He is now lying in the place where they carried him and he is totally unconscious. Tragic to relate, he is in the state of mortal sin. Is there any chance for him in case he does not return to consciousness before he dies? Yes, there is.

Extreme unction is for people who find themselves in just such dangerous predicaments. If this man, before he slipped into unconsciousness, realized the precariousness of his position and called out to God in an act of

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contrition (even though it was an act of imperfect contrition, that is, contrition based on the fear of God's punishments), that would be enough, if it were joined with the sacrament of extreme unction, to take away the sin and permit the man to go to heaven.

This is the power that the priest has as he stands at the bedside of the dying man. He can elicit no act from him now because he is no longer conscious. He cannot hear his confession and give him the unconditional absolution that is given after an ordinary good confession. But Christ designed a sacrament for this very situation. It is this sacrament that the priest administers. He applies the holy oil to the senses, one after another. And as he makes the sign of the cross with each anointing, he cries out to God for mercy on the soul of the dying man.

But the cry for mercy is not merely the prayer of an individual, even though the individual be a priest. It is the power of heaven put into operation. It is the key to the storehouse of God's grace. It is a divine sacrament working as God intended it to work at the end of a man's life when there is no other possibility of the man's going to heaven.

But it is more than a means whereby unconfessed but repented sins are taken away, even though the dying person be unconscious and unable to confess. It is a great boon to those who are in the state of grace, whether they be conscious or unconscious. It provides abundant strength for overcoming the temptations through which the devil may try to win the soul at the very end. It takes away the vestiges of venial sin that may yet cling to the soul, and removes debts of atonement that may still be owed for

past sins. It brings to the soul a special grace designed exactly for the moment of death (if it be God's will that death be the end of this illness), that makes death a glorious, supernaturally meritorious surrender of oneself into the hands of God. These are the many reasons that make every Catholic eager to receive the sacrament of extreme unction before he dies.

The administration of extreme unction is very simple.

The priest is called to the side of the sick person in good time, not after unconsciousness has set in, but, if it be possible, while the senses are still capable of operation. He has oil, consecrated by the bishop during the services of holy week, in a tiny golden container. He dips the thumb of his right hand into the oil and makes the sign of the cross over the sense that he is anointing while he says the words, "Through this holy unction and by the mercy of God may the Lord forgive you the sins that you have committed through the sense of sight." And so he does with all the other senses — hearing, smell, taste, touch. The symbolism of the ceremony is that just as sin is committed through the instrumentality of the senses, so sin is taken away through the anointing of the senses with the cleansing oil of the holy sacrament.

But, of course, we now know that there is much more to it than mere symbolism. There is the assurance of absolute assistance at a time in life when friends, money, position, even family and dear ones are helpless to give us what we may need — the forgiveness of Almighty God. To be anointed at a time like that is worth more than all the wealth and power of the world combined.

You can see, therefore, why I am

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so anxious to be anointed when I come to die and why I am so opposed to the practice current in some circles of allowing death to come to one who is loved without so much as a hint that it is even on the way. This is a brutal practice. I pray that it may not be exercised on you or me.

Of course, I admit that I may not want you to tell me at that time that I am about to die. I may be scared out of my wits by the prospect of standing all alone (I'm sure that there won't be anybody to lean upon or hide behind) before His royal majesty, the King of heaven. His eyes will search out each corner of my soul, looking for the cobwebs of sin that I may not have been sufficiently careful to pull down. He won't miss a thing. Knowing that, I may be shivering in my boots as the dread meeting comes closer and closer. And I may want to act like the ostrich that buries its head in the sand and thinks that thereby its whole body is hidden. I may want the word "death" to be put on the black list and not so much as mentioned in my presence. I may want you to talk about living and laughing and being healthy, and not about dying and passing on into eternity.

You pay no attention to me. You go right ahead and tell me what I should have sense enough to want to know. You have my permission to do it gently. You do not have to barge in and blurt out with blows like those from a bludgeon that I am all through and that I might just as well call on the people who deal in coffins and pick out a nice one for myself. If you talk like that, you might give me my second and final stroke or stop my weak heart from beating once and for all. Just tell me nicely, that is all. And stay with me until I have begun to digest this new and heretofore untasted morsel. I'll be all right. I'm sure of that.

And then go to the phone and call up the priest. Tell him that I have asked to be given everything that he is capable of giving. That I want the Lord in the holy Viaticum. That I want the extreme unction. That I want the last and final blessing. When I go out of this life I want to go out with all the Church can give me. I want the path swept clean between my bedside and the pearly gates. I know that so it will be if I receive the last rites. It's up to you to see to it that I do.

Fortitude

The following is an extract from a letter sent from China by a Catholic layman to a priest who had recently been expelled by the communists.

"I am still a living cell of the Mystical Body of Christ and I hope to remain so forever. To leave the Body of Christ is to give oneself up to death. Most of our brethren are also faithful. The very small number of those who have fallen does not exceed one per cent.

"Formerly I had hoped and prayed to find work in Hongkong. But in all sincerity, if today a magnificent situation were offered me there, I would not accept it. Our Chinese Catholics are now living glorious days. I shall take my share in the struggle and expect to be put to the test. The important thing is not to desert. Please remember me and all Chinese Catholics in your prayers that God's Will may be realized in all of us.

Eastern Messenger

Pre-Marriage CLINIC

Donald F. Miller

Immodest Wedding Dress

Problem: In the last year I have witnessed many Catholic weddings, in most of which the bride and groom would be considered fine, practicing Catholics. However in most of these weddings the dresses of the bride and her attendants were anything but modest. They were strapless, very low-necked gowns, with just a piece of transparent net snapped over the shoulders in such a way that at any slight movement it could become unfastened. These same coverings are usually removed as soon as the bridal party reaches the place of reception. At many of the weddings I attended, the bride would carry out the little ceremony of kneeling before Our Lady's altar before leaving the church, to dedicate herself to Mary. Is this not an insult to Our Lady, when the bride is so dressed that much of the upper part of her body is practically naked? Should not couples be told before their wedding day that the bride and her attendants should be dressed modestly?

Solution: A number of letters to us have spoken about this growing abuse, and we have even noticed it ourselves on some of the rare occasions when we happened to be present at a wedding. Obviously, designers of bridal attire have started a trend toward greater and greater laxity and immodesty in this regard.

Any Catholic girl who aspires to enter the sanctuary and to kneel at the very foot of the altar to be married, should instinctively realize the impropriety of many commonly advertised styles of bridal dress and should have the courage to refuse to approve their use either by herself or by any of the members of her bridal party. Only once in her life is a girl or woman permitted to enter into the sanctuary of a Catholic Church for an official service, and that is for her wedding. Her close approach to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament on that occasion should by itself prevent her from appearing in a type of dress that might be expected to be seen in a border-line night-club or objectionable stage-show. It is disgusting for people who happen to be in church for a wedding to look into the sanctuary and see practically the whole of a woman's naked back exposed, or covered only by the flimsiest gauze.

To all young women who are preparing for their wedding we say: Choose a gown that covers all of your back and shoulders and at least part of your arms, and that is not immodestly low-cut in front. Insist that your bridesmaids do the same. Do this out of love and respect for the God Who will be the most important witness of your wedding.

THE MIRACLES OF LOURDES

John E. Doherty

It was through miracles that the Son of God proved His divinity when He came into the world. It is through miracles that He proves the truth of His Church today.

MIRACLES at Lourdes have baffled scientists since the first cures occurred there ninety-six years ago. Yet it is possible that the greatest mystery connected with these cures is the studied indifference toward them of a large part of the non-Catholic world. For if the reports of the Medical Bureau at Lourdes are correct (and the Church takes fantastic pains to see that they are), then these cures closely parallel the miracles of healing wrought by Our Lord during his public life. Hence those who reject the claims of the Catholic Church today confront themselves with the same dilemma as Christ's contemporaries who denied Him in spite of manifest signs that the power of God was in Him.

Invariably, miracles have attested God's direct dealings with men, from the days of the patriarchs of the human race, through the lives of the prophets and indeed throughout the life of the Founder of Christianity. At the outset of His public life, Our Lord said to the disciples of John who had asked Him if He were the Messiah: "Go and report to John what you have seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not scandalized in Me."

Later when the Pharisees persecuted Him and spurned His teaching He said: "The works that the Father hath given me to accomplish, these very works that I do bear witness of me . . .

if you are not willing to believe me, believe the works . . . believe because of the very works themselves." Finally, when His enemies were already plotting to put Him to death, He said: "Now they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not come and done among them works such as no one else hath done, they would have no sin." The works referred to by Our Lord were His miracles of healing as well as raising the dead to life; these manifest signs from God took away any reasonable excuse from the Jews for denying Him. Yet the cases of sudden healing at Lourdes, at least in some rare instances, are as directly divine and clearly miraculous as the New Testament cures of Christ. It is possible to face up to these cures and refuse to admit the claims of the Catholic Church.

Those who make little of Lourdes are either determined not to believe in miracles or else are only too willing to believe that they occur often and everywhere and since they are not confined to the Catholic Church prove nothing in favor of her claims. But Lourdes challenges both of these viewpoints. The simple truth is that while claims of miracles are frequently made outside of the Church, faith-healing sects dare not submit the evidence for such healings to examination of medical men for judgment. When Christian Scientists in the year 1909 did offer their claims to the British Medical Association, and a committee of

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doctors and clergymen examined them, they concluded after five years of study that there was no evidence for the genuine cure of organic diseases.

Yet at Lourdes there is a process for diagnosing miraculous cures such as exists nowhere outside of the Catholic Church. It consists of a gigantic board of medical men who, as "devil's advocates," seek in the name of science to find a natural cause for every reported cure at Lourdes. In some rare cases the board concludes that the effect of healing is beyond the natural power of any agencies that could have been used to bring it about. A national board of French physicians confirms this. Theologians representing the Church then weigh the evidence and in view of all circumstances declare: "The Finger of God is here." In a word: a miracle.

"The Church does not encourage miracles at Lourdes." These disconsolate words of a stretcher-bearer are almost an understatement. Between the years 1888 and 1910 the Assumption Fathers counted an average of 135 inexplicable cures a year, yet from 1926 to 1938, the number dropped to ten a year. From 1938 on, only six cures are thus far acknowledged canonically, although many more are under study. While the number of pilgrims visiting Lourdes reached about 3,000,000 in 1950, and is increasing, does this mean that at the same time cures are dropping off? Decidedly not. On the contrary it signifies that the process of examining reported cures has become so strict that many, perhaps thousands, are not recognized. By the same token a cure which survives the searching examination at Lourdes is undoubtedly a miracle.

The head of the Medical Bureau

declares that both doctors and theologians are more intent on proving that the cure is not a miracle than they are in finding out what happened. When excited pilgrims bring a patient into the Bureau apparently cured and claiming a miracle, the doctors examine the patient forthwith and record their observations as of that moment. But they demand a complete dossier of his illness and treatment given by his personal physician or the hospital where he was treated. Afterwards he is sent home, but a year later he must return, bringing those who treated him. Of course many do not return, but the board makes a thorough examination again, takes direct testimony, consults with the dossier, and discusses the case. A year later a third examination takes place. Then the doctors meet for a thorough review of the cure, poring over the material in the dossier, judging what is the nature of the illness, whether it is a real cure, what caused it, whether it is permanent, etc. This board makes no judgment of miracles: the majority of its members are non-Catholic and more likely than not are agnostic in their beliefs.

The next step is to send a complete report to the National Medical Commission with offices in Paris, which again examines the file and discusses the case. If its review reveals no explanation for the cure known to experimental science, the case is sent for final judgment to ecclesiastical authorities. In the end it is the Church's prerogative to determine that it is a miracle. In the patient's own diocese a Canonical Commission for investigation is set up with doctors of theology, canon law and philosophy. It is up to these doctors to conclude in the name of the Church that the observations made in this case are precise, and that

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there is sufficient direct testimony to demonstrate the presence of a cure not humanly explicable, but one which must be attributed to supernatural intervention, that of God's power working through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

For checking the cures at Lourdes, the best facilities in the world are available, that of the hospital of the Bureau of Scientific Studies and Medical Findings. The examination rooms are perfectly equipped and the technique for radiology-laboratory work is unparalleled. There are special departments in gynecology, phthalmic diseases, neurological complaints, pulmonary tuberculosis, osteo-arthritis, affection of the digestive tract, etc. It is doubtful whether the world affords a better place for research anywhere, in these ailments or indeed in any disease, not only because of the facilities, but of the unusual variety of cases offered and not least because of the cures themselves. For, though miraculous healings are sudden or instantaneous, they do not violate nature, but on the contrary they may point the way for further advance in the treatment of diseases, and they forbid that any affliction should be considered absolutely incurable.

Thus from all over the world come physicians to assist at Lourdes in the study of miracles. During the year 1952 nearly a thousand doctors and more than a hundred hospital physicians came to work in the Medical Bureau at Lourdes. Dr. Francis Leuret, Professor of Medicine at Bordeaux University and Director of the Bureau, said at that time: "Among these thousand collaborators and observers were non-Catholics and disbelievers, and I am taking this opportunity to ask emphatically of foreign doctors, especially those who are more

or less hostile to Lourdes, that they come and learn for themselves what is being done here, to see if the supposedly cured patients are really examined and how they are examined."

Even though Our Lady had said when she appeared to Bernadette and caused the miraculous spring to rise out of the ground. "I want many people to come here," nevertheless the Church remained silent for years. Then nine years after the apparitions, the Pope himself, Pius IX, spoke of "the shining evidence of the recent appearances of the merciful mother." Since that time pilgrims began to come from all over the world and they came in droves. As pilgrimages increased their numbers, year by year reports of miracles grew, and as far back as 1884, an official Medical Bureau was established at Lourdes to examine these cures.

This Bureau conscientiously checked the cures themselves, the reports of physicians and the direct testimony of witnesses. The Church kept the documentary records of all inexplicable cures, and it was fortunate that it did so, for in the face of continued scepticism on the part of free thinkers, sincere medical men met at Lourdes to discuss these healings. As the immediate result of these discussions it was moved that specialists should be charged with the task of going through all the documents. Hence five of the foremost specialists in the entire world examined all the cases coming within their special provinces and gave an analysis of outstanding cases to the general body. Their findings were published in 1947 under the auspices of Cahiers Laenec, but only those cases which when stripped of medical terminology retained great human interest are widely

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known.

Such is the case of Marie Lebranchu, who was instantly cured of a horribly disfiguring lupus, made famous by Emile Zola in his novel, *Lourdes*. Zola had come as a sceptic to Lourdes. But though he had seen Marie before her cure, he refused to look upon her when they brought her to him afterwards and in his novel falsified many of the facts in the miracle.

Most famous of all is the case of Peter DeRudder, a Belgian farm laborer. DeRudder's leg had been crushed by a falling tree. For seven years he had refused to have the leg amputated but had gone on with the bones of his leg completely separated. At Lourdes he arose from his chair with his leg entirely healed and walked for three miles. After his death several years later, the manner in which the bones had been joined together was studied by physicians with avid interest.

Another case was that of Marie Bire, whose sight was restored, though examination by doctors afterwards showed that the pupils of her eyes were still dead. Perhaps the most pathetic case is that of Paulette Margerie, who had been an invalid from infancy with a complication of enervating diseases, enteritis, pernicious æmia, inguinal hernia and who had been the victim of lifelong pain and suffering. At the age of twenty-two she barely existed rather than lived, and seemed to be on the very point of death when a nun placed some drops of Lourdes water on her tongue. Next morning Paulette arose, dressed herself without assistance and took up a normal life for the first time.

Finally, coming down to more recent times, there is the case of John Traynor in England. Traynor had

come home from the first world war horribly wounded. A visit to Lourdes cured him and he resumed his work as a truck driver. However, the British War Office, which had him listed as incurable and completely disabled, will not accept a miracle as an authentic recovery and therefore insists on paying him his full pension as a disabled war veteran.

Since the turn of the century and between the wars the number of pilgrims visiting Lourdes annually passed the million mark, yet it was not noticeable that scientists were hastening to Lourdes in large numbers and the silence of the public press concerning the miracles was a scandal particularly in this country. In the year 1903, therefore, Our Lady used a scientist well known in this country for her own purposes. This was Dr. Alexis Carrel, a sceptic of sceptics, yet a man with such pride in the integrity of his profession that he could not refuse the challenge of Lourdes.

He went to Lourdes to find an explanation for the cures, and on his voyage was summoned as a doctor to assist a pilgrim suffering from the last stages of tubercular peritonitis. Carrel did not know it but the hand of Divine Providence was leading him on, for he was destined to witness the cure of this girl. In a book which he later wrote, he calls her Marie Ferrand, though in reality she was Marie Bailly. The doctor describes her illness in detail in his posthumous work, *Voyage to Lourdes*, but for the layman it is sufficient to record that she had been coughing up blood since the age of fifteen and that now the disease, in its final stages, had caused a mountain of flesh to form on her abdomen. The stomach looked like a huge tumor, distended beneath the blankets and,

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in the words of Carrel, Marie was "in the last stage of general debility, a hopeless case."

He accompanied her to Lourdes and came over to stand by her side when she was brought on a stretcher and in a dying condition, to the Grotto. The miracle took place at half-past two in the afternoon during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, and the first thing the doctor noticed was that life had come into his patient's eyes. Then, as he watched intently, the tumor began to subside before his eyes, and at three o'clock there was no trace of any swelling. He accompanied the girl to the hospital, with the other doctors gave her a thorough examination, and realized that all trace of sickness had disappeared and that she was now thoroughly well.

Carrel describes this cure entirely from the scientific viewpoint as a man of science. He went on from there to do research in the field of psychosomatic medicine on the effects of prayer on health, yet he became almost bitter at the apathy and even the opposition of men of science to his experiments. "My colleagues," he said, "persist in an obstinate silence and in unpardonable indifference." As for medical men in general he judged that "most of them have never done any real scientific work and have not the slightest idea of what experimental research really involves. . . . The lack of any definite method and the intellectual mediocrity of many of them make them incapable of honest criticism. Most of them still believe that there is nothing but trickery at Lourdes. Yet they dare not test their belief."

At the end of the last war the Bureau of Scientific Studies and Medical Findings at Lourdes was so reorganized and equipped as to challenge

any scientific requirement. The value to the faith of such a Bureau is unquestionable, for it meets the objection that the cures of Lourdes are all in the past. It is now possible for any man of science to accompany the process by which a miracle is weighed in the scientific balance and to check his findings on the persons who were cured and are still alive. At the moment of writing this article these three are the most recent to be thoroughly investigated, for all of them happened within the past seven years.

In September of 1947, a six-year-old French child, Gerard Baillie, was making the stations of the cross together with his mother at Lourdes. The boy had been completely blind from the age of two, but during the way of the cross he recovered his vision. The Bureau ascertained that he had been blinded by chlorioretinitis and that the lesions were still in his eyes, that he also suffered from atrophy, and that therefore he should still be blind. Yet Gerard passed all eye tests. He learned to read by sight and was transferred from the school of the blind to a regular school. He has normal vision and goes to school every day by foot, passing through dense traffic. This is the only case on record of a known return of vision to a victim of persistent chorioretinitis. Nevertheless, as we write this, the Canonical Commission has not officially recognized the cure of Gerard Baillie as a miracle.

In 1947 occurred the cure of a housewife, Madam Rose Martin. It was on the 30th of June that she was brought to Lourdes from Nice in a comatose condition from the last stages of cancer. She was forty-five years old, married and a housekeeper. Two years earlier she had undergone

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an operation for cancer of the neck, but six months later a second operation had to be performed in the Pasteur hospital at Nice. During the following six months cancer had poisoned her entire system. From April till the day of the miracle her condition was alarming. She was helpless in bed, continually under morphine, progressive debility had set in and there was no hope of therapy. Yet after being bathed three times in the waters at Lourdes she returned to her home at Nice and it was found that all morbid phenomena had disappeared. Since that time she has led a normal life. Within a year she gained fifty-five pounds and today is engaged in the strenuous tasks of a housekeeper.

The case which presently engages most attention is that of Jeanne Fretel, who, since the age of twelve, had been in a precarious state of health. Hospital records, medical reports, temperature charts, radiological exposures, certificates of the cure, trace the history of a case which would flabbergast any medical man, Christian or agnostic. Jeanne was thirty-four years of age when she came to Lourdes and was relieved instantaneously of a lifelong series of illnesses. Her mother and three brothers had died of tuberculosis, and Jeanne herself had been afflicted with one childhood disease after another. At the age of twelve she underwent her first operation for appendicitis, and from then on it was one operation after another. By then she had developed acute intestinal disorders which doctors diagnosed as tubercular peritonitis complicated with non-healing fistulas. She had a major operation in 1940, another in 1941, then 1942, one in April and a second in December of 1943, and another in 1944. Finally she had operations for

osteitis and suppuration of the bones in 1946.

As a result of all these and her gradually worsening condition she said "she was ready to die." She had not risen from bed for a year and was incapable of getting up. Now she developed a heart condition and unmistakable signs of meningitis appeared. She could retain no nourishment and three doses of morphine were injected each day to allay her pain. In this state, more dead than alive, her temperature charts showed an amazing irregularity from morning till night. When a decision was made to take her to Lourdes, she did not even know that she was being taken there, and so, on October 8, 1948, she was brought to Mass in a dying condition. A priest approached with Holy Communion but was afraid to give her any portion of the Sacred Host for fear that she could not retain It or that she would not be conscious of receiving It. Finally he placed the tiniest fragment of the Eucharist on her tongue. "It was then," says Jeanne, "that I suddenly felt well and noticed that I was at Lourdes."

"After the Mass I was taken to the Grotto, still on my stretcher. There, after a few minutes, I had the feeling that someone was taking me under the arms to help me sit up. I found myself sitting up. I turned around to see who could have helped me but I saw no one. As soon as I was sitting, I had the feeling that the same hands which had helped me to sit, now took my hands in order to place them on my stomach. At first I wondered what was happening to me: whether I was cured or whether I was not waking from a dream. I noticed that my stomach had become normal. Then I felt an extraordinary hunger."

She ate a hearty meal then and sev-

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eral other times that day. She convinced the doctors that she could walk although her legs were like spindles, and they allowed her to go home. She took the train home to Rennes, standing a good part of the way. Today Jeanne Fretel is a trained nurse, rising each day at 5:30 and working tirelessly in the hospital till late at night. "Since my cure at Lourdes," she says, "I have always remained as well as I am now. I have never taken a pill since."

As one reads through the annals of Lourdes, they recall our Lord's own words: "The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed." Yet it is clear that the Church uses the word "miracle" in a much more guarded sense than is the custom in non-Catholic and lay circles. For officially it recognizes as miraculous only those healings that can have no possible explanation but the

direct intervention of God. Such cures are extremely rare, even at Lourdes, but they are happening today, and in circumstances such as cannot but challenge every unbeliever and even those believers who do not admit the claims of the Catholic faith.

Were the Church less exact in defining miracles or in attempting to find some natural explanation that is even possible, miracles at Lourdes would be multiplied by the hundreds, but these would not so clearly challenge the unbelief of sceptics. Besides, priests hearing confessions at Lourdes assure us that the great miracles are not those of bodily cures but of conversions, and the number of them is beyond count. Nevertheless, even if no one else does, the Church realizes the deadly challenge to unbelief of even one miracle and therefore it takes fantastic pains to see that those recognized are unquestionably genuine.

Problems of Professional People

Francis J. Connell, S.T.D., LL.D.

The Puzzled Musician

Problem: What is the duty of a musician in the following situation: He plays in an orchestra at a night club, where some of the shows are decent, and others include dirty stories, indecent costumes and bad dances. He is a good Catholic whose only reason for retaining this job is to provide a livelihood for himself, his wife and his six children?

Solution: The musician in these difficult circumstances is faced with the problem of co-operation in the sin of others, a problem that arises in many of the situations of modern life. Let us first consider the principles pertinent to such co-operation, and then try to apply them to this particular case.

There are two ways in which a person can co-operate in the sin of another—formally and materially. Formal co-operation is given when the co-operator takes an active and positive part in the sinful deed, or at least encourages the perpetrator or wills his sin. Thus, a young surgeon, asked to help an older doctor in the actual performance of an operation opposed to God's

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law, is co-operating formally if he accedes to the request. Again, a husband co-operates formally with his wife's sin if he advises her to have an abortion. It is never lawful to co-operate formally in another's sin because it means that the co-operator has a real share in the sin.

A person co-operates materially in another's sin if he performs an action that is not in itself bad, though in the circumstances it is utilized by the perpetrator to aid in the commission of the sin. Such would be the co-operation of a nurse who would hand a surgeon the instruments he will use to perform a sinful operation, though she herself takes no part in the evil deed.

Now, material co-operation is permissible, when there is a sufficient reason for the co-operator to give the assistance involved. Thus, the nurse described in the previous paragraph may assist the surgeon if otherwise she would suffer some grave harm, such as the loss of her job. The reason is that the action performed by the material co-operator is not sinful in itself, and hence, for a sufficiently grave reason he can perform this action and tolerate the sinful action on the part of the other.

Now, what of the puzzled musician? In the first place, if he is being spiritually injured by what he sees or hears at the night club, he must at once give up the job, whatever financial loss this may entail.

However, even if he himself is not affected by these indecent shows, he still encounters the problem of co-operation. Some might say that he is a formal co-operator, since the music he furnishes is an actual part of the bad performance; and in that supposition he must leave the night club immediately. I believe, however, that his co-operation can be considered material, since the playing of a musical instrument is not bad in itself and can be regarded as a merely accessory factor of the bad show. But even that, as yet, would not settle the problem definitely. For, if the indecent performances are very obscene and very frequent, he must resign from the job, because even the gaining of a decent livelihood does not furnish a sufficient reason for material cooperation to this extent, and besides there is danger that he is giving scandal. If, however, the objectionable shows are not extremely indecent and not too frequent, he would be allowed to continue his part in the performance in order to provide for his family. Under no circumstances may he applaud or show approval of obscene words or deeds. But he should seek some other situation in which he can earn his living without playing for a dirty show.

Costumes Renewed

During Carnival and on the Fiesta de la Concepcion there is the unique ceremonial of "the dance of the six boys" in the Cathedral of Seville. The Seises dance with castanets in the sanctuary before the high altar and represent the Israelites dancing before the Ark. Their costumes are those of the fifteenth century, in order that the dance may survive a papal decision. One of the Popes was petitioned to abolish this local custom as irreverent, and he ordered that the dance should cease as soon as the costumes were worn out. Immediately a Guild of Ladies was formed for the purpose of keeping the original costumes in repair. They have lasted for over five hundred years.

Quote

Readers Retort

In which readers are invited to comment on views and opinions expressed in *The Liguorian*. Letters to the editors must be signed and the address of the writer must be given, though both name and address will be withheld from publication on request.

DeSoto, Mo.

"The writer has in the past been a booster of your publications, but I have recently read your radical writings on the 'right-to-work' bills. Since when and who has given you the right to mix politics with religion? Getting down to the point, I demand that you take my name off your mailing list and cancel my subscriptions to any and all your publications, as I do not want to support any radical publications. Return whatever money is due me and I will give it to some deserving cause, but rest assured that I will do all in my power to talk against everything the priests of Liguori ever do. I am also going to take up this matter with higher officials in the Church and see if I can't get results in stopping your work.

L.J.M."

We may mention the fact that practically all Catholic scholars and authorities on social justice have expressed opposition to "right-to-work" laws on moral grounds. We are sure that the anger of this correspondent stems from some unhappy experience with labor, and that his violent determination to talk against all the work of the priests of Liguori will be offset by our sincere dedication to the cause of souls and the support of many true Christians.

The editors

Union City, N. J.

"I thought I would add a note to commend you on your article about 'The right-to-work laws.' Your readers who object seem to know neither Catholic social teaching nor the over-all situation. It appears to be a case of rash generalizing from one instance of personal experience or more likely from a few headlines. The only trouble is

that virtue never seems to make headlines in our secular press. At least it is only on a rare occasion. The priest-experts of The Social Action Department of the NCWC who devote themselves full time to watching the state of social problems are not afraid to vouch for the substantial integrity of the majority of existing unions. As Catholics we are bound to the whole truth. This means going out of our way to study the facts from both sides rather than the propaganda of one that happens to be conveniently available. And we do not study facts without a norm of evaluation. We turn the light of the Gospel on the problems which in this case means applying the second of the two great commandments 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' If that saying is a bit too general, a careful study of the 1940 statement of the American Bishops will help concretize the teachings of Christ for American social problems.

Rev. N.N., C.P."

This sums up neatly the task of the Catholic writer on social problems. It seems at times almost impossible to offset the pounding that people take from the propaganda machines and from the slants offered by the often unscholarly, horror-headline-loving, daily press. But with God's help and grace, and the prayers and efforts of many good Christians, progress will be made.

The editors

Pittsburgh, Pa.

"The article on 'right to work laws' in the September LIGUORIAN not only contains errors of fact but is strongly biased against management in favor of unions. It shows lack of understanding of the free enterprise system as it has developed in America. The basic premise of the article is that the

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union movement has been solely responsible for the advancement of the standard of living of our people in the last thirty years. One cannot deny that the union movement has played a part in this, but to say that it has played the dominant or larger part is to ignore many other factors, such as our favorable political climate, our birthright of freedom, our tremendous scientific and technological progress in industry. Most economists will tell you that the most important factor in the advance of wages has been increased productivity. To read your article one would think there must be no restraints on unions, or that every worker should belong to a union regardless of what his conscience tells him. I am a war veteran. For many years I was an employee. After the war I started a corporation which I now manage. I have seen many sides of the union question. I say to you that the right to work is a God-given privilege that no authority on earth has the right to deny. To say that a man must belong to a union to hold a job is to deny him one of the freedoms for which we have fought since the founding of our country.

J.E.S."

The issue, in regard to "right to work" laws, is not whether there should be any restraints on unions (there are plenty of restraints on unions now under the Taft-Hartley law), but whether there should be any unions at all. The logical and almost inevitable historical development of the "right to work" principle will be the emasculation of union bargaining power, the prevention of the formation of effective new unions, and the collapse of present day unions. We agree that the right to work is a God-given privilege, but we add that so also is the right to a living wage. If unions help to unite these two rights, then they should not be undermined or destroyed.

The editors

South Ozone Park, N. Y.

"I have just finished reading the letters

published in Readers Retort in the October issue about the way in which the colored ruin white neighborhoods. The letter-writers are right. Moreover the Negroes of New York do have equal educational opportunities and every other right there is. The white communities of New York are constantly being turned over to Negroes. Where do we whites go from here? Where can we bring up our children without fear of inter-marriage in years to come? Racial prejudice? No. But please tell me how you would feel if your son or daughter came home with a Negro spouse. Is moving to a stricter state the only solution? If it is, then I shall leave relatives and friends just to raise my children among white people.

Anon"

This correspondent's denial of racial prejudice is contradicted by an almost hysterical fear of having to live anywhere near the colored. So long as this state of mind and heart exists, she will not be able to bring up her children properly, i.e., as true Christians, even though she moves to the South Pole. And there are many ways in which children, not brought up to love all their neighbors for the love of God, can break their parents' hearts other than by an inter-racial marriage.

The editors

New Rochelle, N.Y.

"I read with interest the letter from a member of my community in the November LIGUORIAN, especially since he claims to be an A.F. of L. man. He is to be pitied for his lack of understanding and foresight. The right-to-work laws he so glibly speaks about are a disgrace to the worker. The right to work is not an absolute right. A man or woman can work only if they can find an employer willing to hire them. Therefore, right-to-work laws merely protect the right of employers to hire whom-ever they please and on whatever terms they dictate. My friend should note that these laws have been adopted mostly in agri-

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cultural centers and in the south as an incentive for management to move in and make capital of the fact that workers are under a handicap in any attempt at organization. If the right to work were an absolute right, and not a brain-child of the National Association of Manufacturers, it would be the duty of society to provide jobs for everyone who is willing to work. Yet there are about 4,000,000 people at present out of work or only partially employed. I dispute vehemently the statement that ninety per cent of labor is corrupt. The fact is that newspapers make it seem that way because ninety per cent of the time labor news is warped and distorted. Labor has come a long way since the days of exploitation in the early part of this century, and it will fight to preserve the dignity of free men banding together to protect their rights.

N.N."

The point that the right to work is not absolute but conditioned on many factors besides that requiring a man to join a union when he chooses a job in a union shop plant is the one we try to make clear in the Sideglances of this issue. Many of these other factors limiting every man's right to work are far harder on the workingman than the requirement that he join a union.

The editors

Utica, N. Y.

"May I take exception to Mrs. F. J. O.'s letter in the October LIGUORIAN? It concerned her evaluation of the Negro population of Washington, D. C. No segment of our people regardless of race, can be judged as a group, but only as individuals. We know that it is simply not true that all the Negroes in Washington fall into the two unpleasant categories mentioned by your correspondent. If some of them do, the economic and educational discrimination against them mentioned in your reply are responsible. I am not a Negro. If I were, Mrs. F. J. O.'s letter would have hurt me

deeply. It hurt anyway.

L.G."

One of the greatest offenses against charity possible is that of stigmatizing all members of a race, nationality or creed as evil or inferior to other Americans. We are grateful to all who have written to us to deplore this sin.

The editors

River Rouge, Mich.

"I have read with a great deal of interest your writings on the racial problem. From them I draw one of three conclusions: 1) you are colored; 2) you have colored blood; 3) you are a moron. Please cancel my subscription.

R.B.L."

Morons or not, we shall continue to try to love all our neighbors as ourselves for the love of God, and to inspire others to do the same.

The editors

Canton, Ohio

"I am a recent reader of your magazine and your articles on racial prejudice and the letters of two of your readers move me to write these lines. Thank God that the Catholic Church has a Christ-like attitude toward God's dark-skinned children. May she be as uncompromising about prejudice as she is about the other evils of the flesh and society. I am a Catholic, married, the mother of two children, a trained social worker, and a Negro. Prejudice is no stranger to me. It is everywhere and has no regard for the individual. Its most flagrant form is directed against the better class of Negro. This includes the doctor, the nurse, the teacher, the office-worker, the cook, the semi-skilled and skilled laborer, who aspire to better homes, better neighborhoods, better schools, better everything. They are the ones against whom the accusations of lazy, inferior, dirty and spendthrift are directed by your readers. They are the ones who are told that their presence in a white neigh-

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borhood will depreciate property. I am not talking from theory or hearsay: I am a Negro and I know. I know how inhuman a white neighbor can be when she is armed with a broom and shouts profane epithets against me while ordering me to move away from her street and into the slums. I know how iron-clad the real estate code is when you hunt, for seven long years, with a pocket full of money, and there's not a decent house you can purchase. I, and hundreds like me, are not dirty, not lazy, not aggressive nor bold, but are American enough to want what is good and best for other Americans. You, Mr. or Mrs. F.J.O., who classify seventy-five per cent of the Negroes in your town as lazy and dirty, you and I have had more advantages than some, but neither you nor I could take this prejudice, this ostracism, this rejection, in a sane, normal, easy-going manner. If we had as little education, as little family background, as little religious training, as little encouragement and opportunity as most Negroes, our behaviour might be less acceptable. I'm afraid mine would. I too would sit idle on my ramshackle porch or at my broken window—why not? If the finest of my race experience racial discrimination at its worst, what chance have I? I too would laugh louder than anybody to make people think I didn't care. I too would join any radical movement (very few actually have) to thrash back at society. I too would beg, borrow, steal or buy the finest vehicle on wheels and ride like the wind to show that I am not just a punk to be fed on the husks of society. Why not? There would be nothing to lose. Maybe you who have moved out of a neighborhood when a Negro family moved in are just as responsible for the slums that developed as those who moved into your empty homes. Real estate men can thoroughly change a neighborhood from good to bad. A respectable Negro family moves into an all-white neighborhood. The whites are then encouraged by a real estate agent to move into 'restrict-

tive covenant' areas where they are assured Negroes will never scare them from their homes. Their empty homes are then sold or rented to any Negro family with a down-payment. This practice will cease only when first class families of any race or any minority live side by side with others and share the same community interests. Only this will destroy prejudice and prove that no race has a monopoly on all the virtues, just as none has a monopoly on all the vices.

Mrs. P.A.M."

This letter deserves the large amount of space we have given it. It merits the consideration of every thoughtful American.

The editors

Quincy, Ill.

"Your article on the obligation of Catholic schooling in the August LIGUORIAN was very convincing, especially with the direct quotation from Canon Law. I can use that in defending Catholic education. . . However I disagree with your article, 'Should teen-agers take the pledge?' Several good reasons can be given for not asking teen-agers to take a pledge against alcoholic beverages. 1) It often happens that one who is forced to accept an extreme (such as total abstinence) will go to the opposite extreme in the future. 2) You say that a teen-ager who does not drink is a good influence on other teen-agers. I say that one who drinks a little and then stops is a better influence. 3) Quite a few people today maintain that drinking is morally wrong, while they whitewash other actions that are real sins. We need to put things in their proper perspective. There is nothing wrong with moderate drinking.

W.A.S."

There are three facts that offset the arguments here presented. The first is that drinking, while never a sin in itself, can and too often does lead to some degree of alcoholism. The second is the fact that the seeds of alcoholism can be sowed very ef-

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fectively in the immature 'teens,' even by a teen-ager who wants to drink moderately more so than by one who abstains completely. The third is the fact that there is a generally recognized present situation in which many teen-agers do drink to excess, with many results in delinquency. Therefore, while we do not say that teen-agers are bound in conscience to take a pledge on their own initiative, we do not condemn parents who ask them to take one, and we strongly urge obedience to teen-agers of such parents.

The editors

Springfield, Mass.

"Some of your replies to questions sent to you refer to the law of God and also to the 'natural law.' There seems to be a distinction between the two and it has confused me. If we have the law of God on the one hand and the natural law on the other, what is meant by the latter? Who defined it and why is it as important as the law of God?

L.J.P."

We hope that this questioner has by this time read the article in the October LIGUORIAN entitled, "What Laws Can the Church Change?" In that article a complete explanation is given of natural, divine and ecclesiastical or church laws.

The editors

Milwaukee, Wisc.

"Heartly congratulations to you all for putting out such a terrific magazine month after month. The articles are timely and timeless, informative, educating and enlightening. As one of your readers wrote—'Keep hitting 'em hard!' An interesting note, the magazine has come to me through four different hands. It started with a gift subscription to a friend of mine given by her boy-friend (now husband). Her roommate received it as a gift subscription the following year, and she passed her copies on to me. I enjoyed it so much, as did my

mother, that we finally entered our own subscription. Now we shall be passing it on to a missionary through the service mentioned in a recent issue.

J.A."

Jefferson, Wisc.

"No, do not change the title, '*Thoughts for the Shut-in.*' Enclosed within four walls, doomed to inactivity in this life, fenced off, so to speak, from the outside world, what other word could possibly be so expressive? Sometimes the article is an examination of conscience, at other times a rocket piercing the sky to give one a glimpse into the Great Beyond. Always it lifts the shut-in out of and beyond the confines of his room. As for the new format, I call it good journalism.

Sr. M.P., O.S.F."

St. Albans, N.Y.

"I could write a couple of pages extolling THE LIGUORIAN, but this will sum it up. I busy myself distributing LIGUORIANS among cradle Catholics and well-meaning, groping Protestants of my acquaintance. You would be amazed at the reactions I get from my Protestant friends. I am a New York policeman and I encounter the best and the worst of the Negroes as all policemen do. I showed the article on prejudice against Negroes to a Protestant sergeant who is at least discerning, though saturated with the traditional prejudiced notions about our Church. Lo and behold, his reaction was this: 'The priest who wrote that was correct. Christ was the perfect man, and the Catholic Church and her priests preach Christ unadulterated. So I guess we will have to learn to love these Negroes.'

P.B."

Proving that it pays to pass THE LIGUORIAN around, because you can never know beforehand where the seed of the truth will take root.

The editors



For Wives and Husbands Only

Donald F. Miller

Blessing for Pregnant Wives

Problem: Although I have had a Catholic education and am already the mother of four children, I had never heard till recently, that the Church has a special blessing to be given to mothers *before* childbirth. I am expecting my fifth child and was very happy to ask for and receive this special blessing. Eight other mothers received the blessing with me. I am sure many more expectant mothers would be glad to learn of this blessing, and to know something about the prayers it includes. These beautiful spiritual helps to us mothers should not be kept such dark secrets.

Solution: Let the "dark secret" be unveiled once and for all. Every priest's ritual has the blessing referred to, and parish-priests are happy to impart it on request. Here is an unofficial translation of some of the prayers said over the expectant mother in this beautiful blessing:

Let us pray!

O Almighty and eternal God, Who have enabled Your servant, through their profession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of Your everlasting Trinity and "to adore Your unity in the power of its majesty, we pray that by the power of the same faith, this Your servant (name) may be protected from all harm, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray!

O Lord God, Creator of all things, mighty and fearful, just and merciful, Who alone are good and holy; Who freed Israel from every evil, making our fathers dear to you and sanctifying them by the touch of Your Spirit; Who prepared the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mary, that, through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, they might be worthy to become the dwelling place of Your Son; Who filled John the Baptist with the Holy Spirit and caused him to exult while yet in the womb of his mother; accept the sacrifice of this contrite heart and the fervent desire of this Your handmaid (name), who humbly implores Your protection over the child You have given her to conceive. Guard Your own, and defend this mother from every deceit and injury of the wicked enemy, so that, assisted in the hour of childbirth by Your merciful hand, her child may safely see the light of day and be preserved for the holy generation of Your people. May it grow up to obey You faithfully in all things and so deserve to be rewarded with eternal life, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns in unity with the same Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

How to Picture.....

.....The Happiness of Heaven

Patrick A. Kaler

It is impossible to practice the virtue of hope without thinking often about the happiness Christ merited for His followers in heaven. Here's what heaven will mean.

THE happiness of heaven. Upon reading these words, what thoughts come to your mind? If you are a youngster, you might imagine a land of ice cream cones, merry-go-rounds, and a conspicuous absence of schools. If you were an American Indian of about a century ago, you might have pictured your "happy hunting grounds," green meadows under blue skies, with plenty of obliging deer within range of your trusty arrows. Continuing to page back into history, you could find any number of unusual ideas which the imaginations of men have presented as heaven. But that would be dodging the question, namely, what thoughts come to your own mind at the mention of heaven?

As Christians we know that there is more to heaven than pearly gates and gold-paved boulevards. But where do we go from there? If we put aside our colorful imaginings, do we have left only the haziest notions about what heaven is like? It is very much to the point, then, to answer such questions as these: What will the real heaven be like? What is the truth about the happiness of heaven? What will make our happiness perfect and keep it that way?

The answer to all these questions is simple. It can be put down in one sentence: **WE SHALL SEE GOD FACE-TO-FACE.** That sentence is in capital letters for a reason. To make

it more impressive. We humans are so used to "looking through a glass darkly" that we cannot even imagine what it would be like with the curtain removed. It is not the fault of the statement if we do not grasp what it means. The thought behind the words is enough to knock us off our chairs. So, if we are not picking ourselves up from the floor, let's blame ourselves and search deeper into its meaning.

To see God face-to-face. Evidently this does not mean with our bodily eyes. The beatific vision (for that is what it is called) will begin as soon as our soul reaches heaven. We won't have to wait for our body. Besides, God is a Spirit and our human eyes cannot see spirits. God will be seen with our mind. That is, we will possess God through knowledge. By means of it, we and God will be most intimately united. In fact, you might say that God will be closer to us than our own thoughts are now. That we may someday be so united to God should be an awe-inspiring thought. But that is just part of it.

To understand what this extraordinarily close union with God will mean, let us look at the way our soul works here on earth. First, we get to know something. If that something is good, we begin at once to love it. Whenever we see goodness, we cannot help loving it. When we get something for our own, we enjoy it. That's the process:

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knowledge, love and enjoyment. We shall find our soul working in the same way in heaven. The face-to-face vision of God will bring the knowledge. Then, seeing the goodness of God, our whole soul will respond with love. And this love will vibrate with joy in the possession of this goodness. There in a sentence we have the fundamental happiness of heaven: we shall possess God; we shall love God; we shall enjoy God.

Perhaps at this point a slightly uncomfortable thought has edged its way into your mind. It is uncomfortable because it seems to be based on a sense of disappointment and even some irreverence. It might be phrased somewhat like this: "You tell me that the essential happiness of heaven will consist in knowing and loving God. I must admit that it sounds very noble, but when compared with some of the substantial joys of this life, don't you think it sounds a little thin?"

A thought like that should never disturb us. It arises not from any bad will of ours, but from a lack of understanding. We still have not grasped the meaning of the beatific vision. When we were children we could not understand how grown-ups could enjoy reading or listening to music. We were certain that we were having a much better time with our toy soldiers and hobby-horses.

So a person might agree to everything that has been said so far and still be unimpressed with the prospect of heaven. Certainly part of the blame must fall on the vagueness of the language. For example, we said that God is good. In fact, He is Goodness Itself. He is also Truth Itself and Beauty Itself. But the terms are so abstract. Poets and writers tell us that what we need are examples. They have tried to give them to us. They have spoken

of the love of all mothers for their children, the patriot's love for his country, the thirst of scientists for truth and discovery, the loyalty of true friends, and so on. Roll all these together, they tell us, and it is but a crumb fallen from the table of God's goodness, truth and love.

To get an idea of the beauty of God and heaven, they ask us to picture a glowing sunset on the Mediterranean, or a Gothic cathedral pointing its spires to heaven, or a rainbow arching the Grand Canyon. They may tell us to dip into ancient history and imagine the brilliance and glitter of the Roman forum, or the famous hanging gardens of Babylon. They may open the pages of the holy Bible, and remind us of the splendor of Solomon's temple, which shone like a jewel in the sun. They may even recall to us the unrivaled beauties of the garden of Paradise.

All these comparisons help us to understand that heaven will be definitely worthwhile. They put in gear a mental process that works like this: Many men, greater than I, have stood in awe before the things just enumerated. But these examples are just hazy reflections of the actually existing heaven. Heaven, then, is definitely worth striving for.

We said these comparisons are helpful to us. They are. But all of us feel that they are lacking something. Is it not the personal touch? We realize that they are not the complete answer. We have to get that answer for ourselves. After all, goodness, truth and beauty are not strange phenomena utterly unknown to us. Our lives are crowded with many examples. And though they might be less spectacular than the above, they are more real to us. All we have to do is ask ourselves a few questions. In the past,

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what brought joy to my life, lifted it out of the humdrum? Am I happy at the present moment? Why? What things of goodness, truth and beauty are the sources of my happiness? In the future, what would make me happy, what am I longing for?

Of course, we naturally exclude all purely sensual, second-rate, or cheap joys. Once we have done that, there is no reason why the answers to these questions cannot be aids to our understanding the happiness of heaven. This is the way we go about it. We make ourselves realize that the attractiveness, the womanly virtue, that a husband sees in his wife were caused by God. That the husband's manly goodness which has won his wife's heart was caused by God. That the loveliness of their children, the innocence written across their faces was put there by God. All these heart-winning qualities have reality in so far as God has given it to them. But (and this is the point to be emphasized) God does not give what He has not got. Whatever reality He has put in things, He must already have in Himself. He has these qualities not in the partial, imperfect way of this earth, but according to His Supreme Excellence. They won't be less for that but infinitely greater.

To get its full force you must remember that the above paragraph must be taken personally. It is speaking of *your* wife or husband, *your* children or other loved ones. Yes, those close to you, within the framework of your ordinary life, who daily receive an outpouring of your love. For with examples so near and so real, how can you fail to be impressed when you read a sentence like this: The very things you love in these dear ones have reality only in so far as God has given it to them. God is the cause of the good you love in them. Being the

cause and the source, when you find God in heaven, you will find that good again, but on a completely higher level.

On a completely higher level. What does that mean? We cannot understand it perfectly here on this earth. We realize that the poem in the poet's mind is more than the orderly arrangement of type we see on the printed page. It is on a completely higher plane. So all created things are in their Creator in an infinitely superior manner. Among those created things are all those things that have given meaning to your life. All that you hold as precious. Think of the moments of happiness, moments when you would have tricked time into standing still — all these must pay silent tribute to a happiness of which they are only a foretaste.

But let us pause a moment to catch our breath. The splendor of the beatific vision may have left us dazzled. Besides, there are so many human questions to ask. Take for instance the fact of heaven being eternal. Looked at from one aspect, it seems to be the very thing we need to guarantee our happiness. We would not be really happy if we knew that our happiness could be snatched away from us. On the other hand, eternity will go on and on. After a while, won't we get tired of just doing nothing?

We already know that such will not be the case at all. Let us not be fooled by the "Rest in peace" we see carved on tombstones. There will be rest in heaven, but it will not be a mere prolonged and boring vacation. There will also be deep and lasting peace in heaven, but peace as being free from conflict, not as lacking all signs of life. The saints are very much alive. Even those saints who have been in

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heaven for centuries are not getting the least bit bored.

So there will be plenty to do in heaven. But it won't bore us, won't tire us, won't put us to sleep. Monotony will be absent because we will be gazing on Him whom St. Augustine called "O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new!" There won't be any fatigue because the intellect and the will are the faculties concerned. Spiritual faculties just do not get tired or wear out. With Infinite Truth and Infinite Goodness before them, they will, for the first time in their existence, have "found" themselves. Everything will be working in harmony. Life will be at its fullest and richest. And one of the sources of our joy will be our certainty that all this will never end. It will be ours, ours forever, never to be taken away.

There is another question that comes easily to us who live in a very competitive world. It is this: Will some people in heaven be happier than others? Yes, very definitely so. That is what Our Divine Saviour meant when He spoke of the many mansions in His Father's Kingdom. But let us understand this correctly. Everyone in heaven is very happy, perfectly happy. Even the least "saint" has the face-to-face vision of God. Some, however, are happier because they have a better understanding of the beatific vision. They have that because at the time of their deaths they had more grace and charity in their souls. The grace of this world and the glory of the next world are in direct proportion.

Will we envy those who are happier than we are? Not in the least. The difficulty vanishes when we state that everyone will be "as happy as can be." Everyone will be filled with happiness to capacity. But the capacity of some

will be greater than that of others. Now is the time to enlarge our capacity. We do that by increasing in grace and charity. As soon as this life is finished, our degree of heavenly happiness is determined forever.

As we have seen, the face-to-face vision of God is the essential happiness of heaven. Heaven would not be heaven without the beatific vision. But besides this there will be a number of lesser additional happinesses. For example, take the joys that will flow from the company in which we shall find ourselves. Can you picture a more delightful society than that of the angels and saints? We shall experience personally the tender love that our Blessed Mother has for each one of us. Or imagine having a conversation with St. Bernadette, St. Francis of Assisi, or the Little Flower.

Another important question is: Will we know and love our relatives and friends in heaven? By all means. All our dear ones, those with whom we have worked out our salvation, will be loved far more than we ever loved them here on earth. That may be hard to believe, but so it will be. For in heaven our love will be cleansed of all fickleness, all those little human weaknesses. Such will be the happy effect of our loving each other in the shining light of God's love.

Even our bodies (retrieved after the general resurrection) will add to our happiness. Although essentially the same bodies we had on earth, now they come forth "glorified." Not the least pinpoint of pain can touch the glorified body. Everything that is necessary for the completeness of the human body will be present. Definitely out of style in heaven are all such things as crutches, false teeth and toupees, and even aspirins and vitamin

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pills. In short the body will be absolutely perfect.

It is true that some of the purely material appetites, and some of those operations we have in common with the animals, will cease. There would be no point to them any more. For in heaven the soul will take charge. Matter will be dominated by spirit. Perhaps even here on earth we have had a hint of this soul-domination in some good, deeply spiritual acquaintance of ours. Even though this person's features might be plain, has not the goodness radiating from his or her face given it a beauty that is pleasing even to our senses? So it will be in heaven, a hundred times over. The splendor of the soul will shine right through the body. Spiritual beauty will be just as real to us as physical beauty is now.

. One final word to sum it all up.

The essential happiness of heaven will be the face-to-face vision of God. From that will flow the love of God and joy in Him. Everything that caused us happiness in this life we shall find again in heaven, but on a much higher plane. All these things and persons and their goodness were created by God, and hence are present in Him according to His Infinity. God, then, is the one God in whom are all good things. Besides this there will be many other added happinesses, like the fellowship with the angels and saints, reunion with our loved ones, and the perfections of our glorified bodies. A tremendous amount of happiness is waiting for you, if you keep God's commandments and live in His grace. If you keep God's commandments. For heaven's sake, what are you doing about it?

The Kings

The traditional names of the three Wise Men who visited the Infant Jesus and offered Him gifts are well known—Gasper, Balthassar and Melchior. An old writer, Sir Thomas Browne, thus states their history:

"These wise men or Kings, were probably of Arabia, and descended from Abraham by Keturah, who, apprehending the mystery of this star, either by the spirit of God, the prophecy of Balaam or the prophecy which Suetonius mentions, received and constantly believed throughout all the East that out of Jewry one should come that would rule the whole world: or the divulged expectation of the Jews from the expiring prediction of Daniel; were by the same conducted unto Judea, returned into their country, and were afterwards baptized by Thomas. From whence about three hundred years after, by Helena the Empress their bodies were translated to Constantinople. From thence by Eustathius unto Millane, and at last by Renatus the Bishop unto Collein: where they are believed at present to remain, their monuments shown unto strangers, and having lost their Arabian titles, are crowned Kings of Collein (Cologne)."

Stamp-collectors hold as a prize a postage stamp issued in Canada some years ago on which is represented a map of the world with the inscription: Christmas, 1898.

On What Basis Unity?

An ever recurring item in our newspapers these days is the effort of Protestant denominations to unite into one organization. This is a laudable movement and perhaps a step in the approach to truth, but a Catholic cannot help wondering how it is to be accomplished and what is to come of it.

Donald J. Corrigan

WE were enjoying a game of pinochle, two Catholic gentlemen, a "dyed-in-the-wool" Baptist lady (as she described herself), and I, a Catholic priest. The lady had displayed her rosary and informed me that from time to time she attended Mass. But while the cards were being dealt, she told me:

"There are a lot of things I like about Catholics but as a rule they are too narrow."

My only answer to that one could be:

"Catholics *have* to be narrow where truths and principles are concerned. I don't think that you will find them narrow in their judgment about individuals."

That conversation came back to mind as I recently re-read an article on "Too Many Churches" I had clipped from the June, 1948, edition of *American Magazine*. It was written by Norman Vincent Peale, D.D., pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church. It pointed out the scandal of disunited Christianity and made an appeal for the Protestant churches to get together. Incidentally, though it mentioned Catholics two or three times, it in no way referred to the position of the Catholic Church on unity.

Intriguing, indeed, was one paragraph of the article, which exemplified

quite vividly why there can never be any real Protestant unity except of a loose, shadowy sort. To quote the paragraph:

"This disunity arises almost entirely out of a confusion of terms—church and religion. Religion is not a church, and neither is church a religion. Religion is a divine fire that lives in the hearts and minds of men. Church, in any form, is merely an organization of dogmas, creeds and property. All people of faith believe in fundamentally the same things, but the confusion over these two terms has existed for centuries and is largely responsible for the widespread spiritual impotence we see today."

We are afraid that Dr. Peale has fallen into a practice which, as a modernistic Protestant, he would vigorously decry, when with one stroke he so *dogmatically* wipes out the traditional view of religion and Christianity. Aside from that, his thesis is vague, misleading and false. Let us analyze each statement and see why.

"This disunity arises almost entirely out of a confusion of terms—religion and church. Religion is not a church, and neither is church a religion."

That statement could possibly be

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true if humankind had been left unaided to work out some system of purely natural religion, but even in such a state human beings, since they are rational and social, would have had to develop some code of beliefs, ritual and laws, which in reality would have been an organization or a church.

The trouble with Dr. Peale is that he does not seem to realize that there is such a thing as *revealed* religion. In other words, he ignores the fact that our Saviour, God as well as man, came to earth to tell us what to believe, what to do and how to do it, in order to be good Christians. Now if our Saviour identified His religion with His Church, then Dr. Peale, and so many modern day Protestants with him, is off base from the start. I cannot help but recall the words of our Lord to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (*Matthew 16/18*)

"Religion is a divine fire which lives in the hearts and minds of men."

If this be a representative Protestant definition of religion, then it is easy to see why, outside the Catholic world, there is so much confusion in religious thought and cooperation today. As a definition of religion, the above statement is just about meaningless!

It was probably Dr. Peale's intent to make his definition broad enough to include every shade of diverse Protestant thought. But it is to be feared that the definition is too broad even for the needs of Protestantism, for it can embrace even the diabolical acts of the enemies of Christ and Christianity. Surely Saul, before his conversion, was consumed by some kind of "divine fire," when he ferreted out

the first Christians to hand them over to the civil authorities for death. So, too, must have been the French revolutionists, when they set up the goddess of reason, and the Communists of our day, who would destroy all religion, organized or not. They all have a fire in their hearts, and at least they think it divine.

No real unity can come to Protestant bodies until they arrive at the truth of what religion is. In its simplest form the true definition is that religion is "the right relationship between God, our Creator, and ourselves, the creatures." Our Lord came to earth to point out that *right relationship* and He incorporated it all — the truths we are to believe, the moral and ascetical laws that we are to keep, the manner in which we are to worship and the authority by which we are to be ruled — in the one Church He founded. Our Saviour held all this so inviolable that He declared to His Apostles: "He that hears you, hears Me; and he that despises you, despises Me." (*Luke 10/16*)

"Church, in any form, is simply an organization of dogmas, creeds, and property."

Dr Peale is attempting here to suit his definition of a church to the needs of his article. In the course of his dissertation he had blamed differences of doctrinal beliefs as the cause of the original break-up of Protestantism into contradictory sects, while he described property-holdings of the differing churches as the major obstacle to unity today.

Regarding property, it is inconceivable that any organization could do without ownership of property in some form. But aside from that unimportant observation, Dr. Peale is evidently

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confused when he distinguishes between dogmas and creeds. Both mean just about the same thing: the proven truths or beliefs of Christianity. That in Dr. Peale's mind such dogmas or proven truths are unimportant, is evident from his further words:

"The Protestants originally separated into sects over differing conceptions of theology, but these differences are of little real significance to the average man today. Not one modern Protestant out of fifty could tell you in what doctrinal respects Methodists differ from Baptists or Presbyterians from Congregationalists."

We can be pardoned if we wonder what St. Paul would say about such an assertion today, the same St. Paul who declared very emphatically to the Galatians: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema!" (1/8)

How different and concise is the Catholic definition of the Church: "The Church is the congregation of all baptized persons united in the same true faith, the same sacrifice, the same seven sacraments, under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him."

Then Dr. Peale goes on to say:

"All people of faith believe fundamentally in the same things."

That statement is almost as untrue as to say that Communists and Catholics hold as true the same things. We may wonder what constitutes "fundamental truths" in the mind of Dr. Peale and so many of his co-religionists. When we see one large group of Protestants denying the divinity of

Christ, another denying the reality of hell, still another denying the seven sacraments, some even denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, we can rightly ask: Are there really, in the Protestant concept, any fundamental Christian truths that all Christians must believe?

There is no such confusion among Catholics. Every truth that has been revealed either by Our Lord to the Apostles or by the Holy Ghost through the Bible and which has been subsequently, continuously taught by His infallible Church, is fundamental and therefore necessary to the faith of a Christian. We may not arbitrarily divide these revealed truths into fundamental and accidental, necessary and unnecessary. In other words, there can be no compromise with our Saviour's teachings; as believing Christians, we must accept the entire content of revealed truth as preserved by His divinely guided Church or none at all. This is in accord with the final commission of Christ to His Apostles: "Teaching them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28/20)

"But the confusion about these two terms (i.e., church and religion) has existed for centuries and is largely responsible for the widespread spiritual impotence today."

The truth of the matter is that up to the sixteenth century there was no confusion regarding "Church and religion." Christians universally accepted the fact that Christ established one true religion and embodied it in the "one, holy, Catholic, apostolic Church." (Council of Nice — 325, A.D.) Even the Schismatic Greeks, the only large segment that separated from the Catholic Church prior to the

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sixteenth century, adhered to this truth and merely renounced their obedience to the Pope.

That in the last four centuries there has been "confusion," we readily grant. But this confusion has been in the non-Catholic world, not the Catholic. The resultant and inevitable division of Protestantism into varying and contradicting sects (265 in this country alone, according to Dr. Peale) has certainly contributed to the "widespread spiritual impotence" today. It would be more correct, however, to say that the largest factor in producing modern paganism was the very creation of Protestantism, in as much as it split the Christian world, set up a variety of contradictory teachers, and took millions from the fold of the "one faith, one baptism, one shepherd."

No, Catholics are not narrow, no more than scientists who hold out against opposition because they know their truths to be solidly proved. Catholics are merely consistent when they maintain that there can be no real, universal unity of Christendom until all who have any belief in Christianity come back to the *one* Church, to which Christ promised and sent the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, Who would abide with it forever. (*John, 14/16*) Then, and then only, will there be a Church where all believe the same teachings, partake of the same sacraments, are spiritually governed under one head, the successor of St. Peter, and when all can say that they belong to a fold that originated with Christ and the Apostles. Such can only be the Catholic Church.

Warm Welcome

In a western Ontario town, there was always a capacity congregation at the Midnight Mass on Christmas night, since it was a sacred "must" not only for Catholics, but for many interested non-Catholics.

One Christmas Eve the pastor noticed from the sanctuary that there was evidently no seating room for three women standing in the rear of the church. They were non-Catholic neighbors. He quietly summoned an altar boy to his side and whispered the order, "Three chairs for the Protestant ladies."

The altar boy looked puzzled, swallowed hard and took two or three halting steps. When he saw that the boy did not understand him, the priest beckoned to the lad and again whispered, "Three chairs for the Protestant ladies."

As if to conquer his reluctance, the altar boy drew a deep breath, turned to the congregation, and shouted from the sanctuary, "Three cheers for the Protestant ladies."

Madonna

Modern Pharisee

Two men went to church to pray, one a prominent citizen, the other a poor school teacher. The prominent citizen said: "O God, I thank Thee that I am not like these professional people, even as this poor teacher. My money built this church; I give liberally to the foreign missions; why, I probably pay half this teacher's salary."

But the school teacher, bowing humbly said:

"O God, be very merciful to me. I was that man's teacher."

Happenings in Rome

Monthly round-up of significant events in the capital of Christendom.

Christopher McEnniry

American Generosity:

In the auditorium of the papal building dedicated to Pope Pius there gathered a unique assembly: a number of Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and other ecclesiastics, high-ranking civil and military officials, the diplomats accredited to the Holy See, and representatives of the various categories of the poor and homeless who had been saved from starvation by the charity of American Catholics.

The occasion was the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the "War Relief Service" of the "National Catholic Welfare Conference." The purpose was to manifest public and official gratitude to this "Service" and to the American Catholics who so generously contributed to it.

The celebrated Carabinieri Band (the Carabinieri are a country-wide police force something like the Canadian Mounties) extended a welcome by playing the national anthems of Italy and the United States. Monsignor Baldelli, President of the Pontifical Commission for Help to the Needy, which worked in cooperation with the War Relief, addressed the gathering. This meeting was called, he said, to express public thanks to the Americans in the name of the countless poor and suffering who had benefited by their charity. But also, he added, to manifest the gratitude of the Catholic Church and of the entire Italian people — gratitude which the Holy Father himself had emphasized in two precious letters written during this time. The American Catholics, he declared, had written one of the most

luminous pages in the history of Christian charity by all they had done during these ten bitter years to restore spiritually and economically so many unfortunate persons reduced to misery and destitution by the war. He then read two letters addressed to the gathering, one by the Pope, the other by the President of the Italian republic.

In this letter the Pope said: "The Italian people have learned to know, through the activity of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the heart of the Catholics of the United States — a heart that understands that the best way to use one's possessions is to share them with the needy . . . while we lift up to God Our thoughts and Our thanks, We are happy to express Our Paternal approval of all those in far-off America who have in any way contributed to alleviate human suffering, and We invoke upon them all, as a pledge of peace and Christian prosperity, the choicest blessings of heaven."

In his letter the President of the Italian Republic said: "My heartfelt greetings to the American representative of the War Relief Service and to all present at this demonstration. I am certain that I voice the unanimous sentiments of my fellow-countrymen when I thank all who participated in this noble work which reaffirms the traditional friendship of the American and Italian peoples and which has contributed so powerfully toward the reconstruction of our country after the scourge and destruction of war."

Next Cardinal Ottaviani rose to give honor to, what he called, the four

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paratroopers of the Holy Roman Church. Those were the four American priests who, ten years ago, while the war was still raging, were air-borne from America to Rome, to begin the charitable work for the hungry and homeless of Italy. For, said the Cardinal, the Church has her heroes who scorn dangers and hardships to hasten to the assistance of their brothers wherever war and floods and famine and earthquake and plague sow suffering, sorrow, misery and death.

Tiny tots who had been given the benefit of the salubrious air of sea or mountain in the summer camps, came with their offerings of flowers. Shepherds from the Abruzzi and goatherds from Sardinia, dressed in their picturesque garb and singing, to the accompaniment of flutes and pipes, their dialect songs, brought home-woven gifts. Weatherbeaten fishermen too had come up from the bays and coves to join in the demonstration. All were there to represent the thousands and thousands of poor people whose simple homes and means of livelihood had been wiped out by the war and who had been helped back to self-support by American charity.

Lastly a charming group of well trained children sang "*Canto di Primavera* — Spring Song," by Rossi, and "*Il Signor non e' morto*," from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The audience, most of whom had heard the terrifying roar of bursting bombs, departed with the sound of these sweet, innocent, young voices ringing in their ears.

Pope to Pharmacists:

Representatives of fourteen countries, assembled at Rome for a congress of pharmacists, sought an audience with the Pope. He received them with his usual charming affability. He harked back to the days of Roman

antiquity and named names of pioneers in this art of healing. He reminded them that this very society had been inaugurated by a Pope, Pope Martin V, in the Church of St. Lawrence in Miranda, amid the ruins of the pagan temple of Antonini, and Faustini, overlooking the Roman Forum. After praising them and their great work for suffering humanity, he did not hesitate to give a clear admonition. "Let no importunity, no profit," he said, "ever induce you to sell drugs that will be used for evil purposes. And again, when frantic parents are prepared to sacrifice everything to obtain the remedies which they believe will save the life of a loved one, do not charge them so much, do not let the big drug companies charge them so much, that they will be ruined. I hope, gentlemen, you will not take offense at my words. It is a duty of my Apostolic office to plead for the poor."

Displaced Persons:

If you and your family were suddenly told to pack what you could carry in bags and get out of your house and out of your country; if you were then dumped in a strange land where there was no room for you and no means of making a living and your family was in danger of being permanently separated — if that were done to *you*, how you would suffer! But that very thing was done to hundreds of thousands of your brothers and sisters throughout the world. You do not stop to picture to yourself how they suffer. The Pope does. He has never ceased to use all the means and all the influence in his power to better the sad lot of these exiles.

The "International Catholic Commission for Emigration" held a meeting at Breda, Holland. The Pope ad-

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dressed them through his Pro-Secretary of State. In order to reach directly as many of the participants as possible he chose the English language.

"How important are the deliberations of your meeting is illustrated by the frequency with which this subject of migration has recurred in the labors and discourses of the Supreme Pontiff. The constant solicitude and charitable aid extended through the Papal representatives to the vast populations uprooted from their homes both during and in the years following the late war are too well known to need repetition.

"The Pope said: 'We are pleased that your assemblage has contributed to render world opinion conscious of the gravity of this task. And We are doubly pleased by the fact that spiritual and moral values, which in emigration and immigration must be preserved, protected and developed, have found a notable place in your Congress, as well as the dignity of the human person and of the family, in order that the latter may remain united, that it may be able to establish a new home and find there the necessities for a life of contentment and one pleasing to God.

"We know how much there is yet to do, and the many labors and difficulties to be confronted in resettlement in a new country and on new land. We thank you the more warmly for your effort, and We invoke from the depths of Our heart upon the work of emigration and immigration the protection of God and the abundance of His divine favors.'"

Message to Canada:

Canadian Catholics held a double convention — one in French at Mont-Laurier and one in English at Toronto. The subjects proposed for consideration were "Rural Life" and "Im-

migration."

The Pope expressed his deep satisfaction over their convention and especially over the questions they hoped to solve. He expressed this satisfaction in a French Letter to Cardinal Leger and an English letter to Cardinal McGuigan.

"The Creator Himself seems to indicate that a large part of your country should be given to agriculture. Its vast plains and forests, are they not a mute invitation to your industrious citizens to devote themselves to the preparation and cultivation of the soil? Nevertheless, with our modern industrial civilization, Canada, like so many other countries, has been forced to witness the sad spectacle of the exodus from the farm to the city. These people have turned their back on vast regions of fertile land that could be brought under cultivation, and even, in some cases, they have abandoned the farms they had already worked.

"This situation is not only economically unsound, it is further a menace to the moral and religious welfare of the population. The crowding together of great masses in the cities brings great dangers. Why should the cultivators of the soil abdicate their noble profession to lose themselves in the cities, where, only too often, they find disillusionment, the loss of their hard-earned savings, and where not infrequently they lose health, strength, contentment, and even their immortal souls?"

That is why the Pope is happy to see the bishops and priests striving to foster a healthy rural church that will keep the people on their ancestral farms, and also working to induce the vast number of Catholic immigrants to settle on the land where they can raise God-fearing families.



Sideglances

By the Bystander

We have been mulling over the word "compulsion" ever since we published an article in condemnation of so-called "right to work" laws and thereby brought down on ourselves a flood of angry correspondence, together with, let it be stated, many letters that praised the logic of our position. However, practically all the letters that disagreed with our conclusions centered their argument about the word "compulsion." "No working man should be *compelled* to join a union," they said. Or, "Compelling workers to join a union is contrary to the very ideal of American freedom." The United States Chamber of Commerce expresses the same thought in one of its Labor Relations Letters in stating its belief that "the right of employees to organize and bargain effectively should be upheld whenever such action is a result of their own free and *uncoerced* choice; that individuals should be free to join or not to join labor organizations; that the right to work should not be dependent upon union-membership or non-membership." It is an obvious fact that there is a strong, native, psychological instinct in every American against being compelled to do things. "Nobody is going to shove me around," is, in slang, a kind of inborn slogan for Americans. The question is this: Is this cherished freedom from compulsion challenged by union shop agreements or is it being used to cajole the unwary and the ignorant into helping to reduce and then destroy the influence of unions for social justice?

Being required to join a union after taking a job in a certain plant is at most a

conditional sort of "compulsion," if that word is to be used at all. There are many kinds of conditional compulsion to which Americans submit without murmur; there are many rights that Americans enjoy only on condition that they submit to regulations that are a limitation of their freedom. Every citizen of America has a right to join any social or fraternal organization that he wishes, but the right can be exercised only if he is willing to submit to the laws of the organization he chooses. Every American has the right to free speech, but he can exercise it without having his freedom taken away from him by being put in jail, only if he obeys the laws forbidding libel, obscenity, treason, etc. Even in exercising his right to work, entirely apart from the question of whether he should or should not be required to join a union, a man submits to many so-called "compulsions" sharply defined by his employer. "If you want to work here," says the employer, "you must work such-and-such hours every day; you must do what your foreman tells you to do; you must observe certain rules of safety and fire-prevention; you must accept a lay-off when it is decreed by management." No one thinks of defending his right to work without submission to these "compulsions" that are decreed by an employer. If he tries to assert his right to work without being compelled to keep the rules laid down by his employer, he soon finds himself without any work at all. These are, we admit, very obvious statements; but they make clear the fact that we all accept many conditional "compulsions" as a matter of course in our daily lives. If we choose to exercise a certain right that we possess,

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we accept the rules that society or a part of society has laid down for the proper use of our right.

Those of us who argue against the justice of "right to work" laws do so on the ground that the organization of workers into collective bargaining units is necessary to safeguard individual workers from exploitation. There are really three steps in our argument. The first is the principle, clearly set down in papal teaching on social justice, that all workers are entitled in justice to a living family wage, and that it is the first obligation of management to try to pay such wages. The second step is the fact that most owners and managers of business have not been taught to think in terms of living, family wages for their employees, but rather to set up their wage scales according to the fluctuating circumstances of supply and demand in the labor market. The third step is the fact that by organizing and speaking as a unit, the hired workmen of an individual employer can effectively represent to him their primary rights as human beings, and can bring about the payment of at least something like living wages. A fourth step can be added to these three, which is really included in the third; the voice of a particular group of workers will be and remain effective in bargaining for living wages, only if it represents all of the group. It is true that the law today requires that all workers in a plant be covered by agreements between management and an accepted union in the plant, even though only part of the workers belong to the union. But, apart from the fact that there is something inequitable in a non-union man profiting by benefits won for him by a union without his supporting that union, there is the inescapable fact that, if a plant may hire, with the sanction of law, as many non-union men as it wishes, the voice of the union will grow less and less effective with the passage of time, until eventually it will have no bargaining

influence at all. On top of that is the already proved fact that the right to work laws can be used to prevent the organization of workingmen in labor areas where most of a community is dependent on a certain plant for jobs, and where management chooses simply to fire anybody who campaigns for the establishment of a union. The right to work laws give such a management the right to coerce workers in this way: "You can have a job here, but only if you oppose the formation of a union." We call that an unjust form of compulsion.

So we come down to this: There is no unjust "compulsion" of workers in requiring that, after they land a job in a certain unionized plant, they join the union. Rather, they are thereby brought into effective cooperation with their fellow-workers for aiming at goals that will otherwise rarely be attained—the prevention of exploitation of labor, and bringing about the payment of living wages. But what about the workman who has a constitutional dislike for belonging to a union, or has been soured on unions through unhappy experience with evil labor leaders in the past? Such men can make a living by doing things that bring them into no contact with unions: by farming, by running a small business of their own, by entering a field of labor that has not yet been touched by organized labor. The trouble is that so many of these are attracted by the fairly good salaries that unions have effectively bargained for in certain big plants, which they know they could not equal in any other line of work. They want the good salaries which the union made possible, but they don't want the union. Such men feed unconverted, old-time, anti-union employers with the hope that some day there will be enough of them to destroy the unions and put an end to anything like bargaining between management and labor.

There is much talk, on the part of those

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who are promoting the right to work laws, to the effect that most unions have become so evil and at the same time so powerful that something must be done by the state to curb them. First of all, let no one be deceived by the flood of propaganda that makes all unions appear vicious and evil, or even a major part of them. As we have said so often, the newspapers are responsible for intensifying this propaganda, because to them, a labor leader caught in graft or racketeering is news; one who does his job conscientiously and well never makes the headlines. But all of us have to admit that

there are wicked men among labor leaders, and instances of gross abuse of labor power. We shall favor any proposed legislation that will make it easier to punish racketeers in labor, and to put a stop to any abuse of union power. But we cannot favor right to work laws, because they are aimed at the very life and existence of unions which are a necessary means for the promotion of social justice and the only approach we now have to that friendly cooperation between capital and labor looked forward to by all men of good will.

Biblical Problem

Edward A. Mangan

The Mammon of Iniquity

Problem: There is a passage in the New Testament in which our Lord urges his listeners to "make friends of the mammon of iniquity." What does this mean?

Answer: 1. The meaning of the statement, "make friends of the mammon of iniquity," is clear from the context of this whole passage (*St. Luke, 16:9*). Our Lord simply means that while we have time and opportunity to do so, we should use our worldly goods in such a way as to make friends who in turn will help us at death when money and worldly goods will no longer be of any profit to us. These "friends" would be the good deeds done with our money, the merit of which will ease our passage into eternity.

2. Our Lord calls money the "mammon of iniquity" not because money is bad in itself, nor because it is always acquired unjustly, but because the acquiring of money can easily lead to all sorts of evil or iniquity. This same implication is contained in our Saviour's statement: "How difficult it is for a rich man to enter heaven," and in St. Paul's words to Timothy: "The love of money is the root of all evil."

3. In a recent new translation of the New Testament (Kleist-Lilly edition), our Lord is made to say "Money is a worthless thing, but use it to make friends for yourself." We consider this an inaccurate translation. Our divine Saviour made no statement about the worthlessness of money. He says in effect that it will be worthless at death, but for now He simply says: "Make friends by using the mammon of iniquity, or money which can lead to evil." Money is not evil in itself, but in the temptations it engenders; in itself it can be exchanged for many good things, and much good can be accomplished with it.



Catholic Anecdotes

Divine Neutrality

In the early days of the Sino-Japanese War, as related in *The Salesian*, a Catholic missionary Father Palombo, and his American helper, Repton, were on a missionary tour of Father's vast parish. Suddenly, a band of Chinese guerrillas swooped down upon them. They had the appearance of real cut-throats and the priest and his helper recommended their souls to God. But six of the guerrillas were Catholics. They had waylaid the priest to have an opportunity of going to Mass, confession and Holy Communion.

They all then went to a tiny mission settlement to hear Mass which was fixed for the early hours of the morning. Just when all was ready for Mass and Father Palombo was hearing the last of the confessions, the Japanese surprised and occupied the mission.

The Japanese soldiers came into the chapel and covered the group of worshippers with their guns. The little Chinese altar-servers fled in terror and for a moment, in tense silence, the priest paused at the foot of the altar before beginning Mass, because there was no server.

There was a slight movement at the back of the chapel, and the Japanese officer took off his helmet and revolver, knelt down, and served the Mass.

Their nations were at war, but during the august Sacrifice they were one. Together they bowed their heads at the Consecration and together they all went up to receive Holy Communion.

Cut Spring Flowers

When Blessed Jean Venard was held captive for two months in a bamboo cage, set up in the very center of Tonkin, for all to gloat over, his bishop could say of him, "Although in chains, he was as gay in his cage as a bird."

A pious widow managed to conceal a Host in a piece of bread and slip it between the bars of the cage. "My Jesus, the Bread of the traveler, in my cage. Think of that!" he wrote to a friend.

As the day of his execution drew near, he wrote to his family, asking them to rejoice with him, in these words:

"A slight sabre-cut will separate my head from my body, like the spring flower which the Master of the garden gathers for His pleasure. We are all flowers planted on this earth, which God plucks in his own good time; some a little sooner, some a little later. I, poor little moth, go first.

"When my head falls under the executioner's axe, receive it, O loving Jesus, O Immaculate Mother, as the bunch of ripe grapes which falls under the scissors; as the full blown rose which has been gathered in your honor."

As was the custom, he was asked how much he would give to have the job done quickly and well.

"The longer it lasts the better," was the reply. "Here am I, O Lord, Thy little martyr."



Pointed Paragraphs

New Year's and Resolutions

There is nothing more nonsensical than the practice of some people who make New Year's resolutions about trivia and incidentals when there is an obvious moral cancer in their lives that they have no desire to resolve about at all.

The example that comes to mind is that of the remarried divorcee (the first marriage was valid and so the second marriage is no marriage at all) making a resolution (amidst much fanfare and newspaper publicity, if she is a public figure) to wash her teeth three times a day instead of twice or to smoke only one package of cigarettes a day instead of two.

That is like the convict making a strong resolution that he'll keep his hair combed all during the new year although he is scheduled to lose his head (as well as his hair) under the knife of the guillotine on the first day of the new year. About the latter (his manner of approaching death) he makes no resolution at all; about the former (his hair) he makes an iron-clad resolution.

Most people fail in this regard. They spend their energies on the unimportant things of life, on the things that pass, on the things that serve and save the body. Many will make a resolution this year to give up smoking only because they have heard that smoking can bring cancer to the body. People will resolve anything to preserve the health of the body. They will resolve nothing or very little to make sure of the salvation of the soul.

This is utterly insane.

It can be prevented by a thorough, prayerful study of the New Testament. What does it mean to be a Christian? What sacrifices are demanded? What must I do that I have not been doing during the past year?

If a wife who is not a wife must be put aside for Christ's sake, she is. If a basement full of liquor must be destroyed, it is. If Mass and Communion must be attended each day to overcome a certain vicious habit of sin, they are. And so on down the list. The true Christian on New Year's is not concerned with an ingrown toenail when a malignant tumor is protruding from his soul. He begins the New Year by working on the tumor. If he gets rid of that, he feels that the ingrown toenail will take care of itself.

The Three Kings

One of the very important feasts of January is that of the three kings who came on a long journey from the East in order to present gifts to the newly born King in Bethlehem.

Who told the three kings to bring gifts? Did they know that the little King would be poor? Evidently not, for the gifts they brought were not the type of thing that one would ordinarily think of donating if one were asked to do something for a poor family in the neighborhood. It is quite certain that a hungry stomach cannot be satisfied with frankincense and myrrh. Yet, frankincense and myrrh were some of the gifts presented.

So, the kings did not give their presents because they felt that the holy

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family needed help. They gave their presents, without anybody telling them that they had to do so, because their hearts suggested to them that sacrifice is the proof of love and devotion and respect. The sacrifice they were willing to make was not only the inconvenience of the long trip but also the precious things that they presented to the Infant with their own hands. And the Infant received the gifts with joy and gratitude. What the kings gave to the little Boy, they gave to God.

Every Catholic who feels inclined to complain when he is asked to give gifts to God as God is represented in a new school, or a new church, or in the person of some non-Christian in a far-off pagan land who can hear about the love of Our Lord only through the material donations of those who have already heard about Him, should make a short meditation on the story of the three kings from the East. "They came bearing gifts."

The gifts the modern Christian gives to the Church are in no way different from the gifts that the kings brought to the stable. Knowing this, the modern Christian may be able to refrain from complaining. He may be able to be even more generous to God than he was in the past. His gifts may begin to take on the note of "preciousness" in the sense of greater and greater generosity.

Modern Rosary Apostle

An impressive example of the good that can be accomplished by a completely dedicated man is supplied by the fact that the title of this little essay applies preeminently to one individual: Father Patrick Peyton. For some ten years Father Peyton, a Holy Cross priest, has been utilizing every possible means of communication and every phase of the entertainment world

to get across his message that prayer is essential to the peace of the world, that the rosary is the best and most easily said of private prayers, and that the rosary said in the family group is a wonderful means of cementing the family bond. "The family that prays together stays together."

A little booklet sent out by Father Peyton's Family Theatre office both sums up and dramatizes the tremendous influence for good wielded by this zealous priest. In all the chief means of communication with the public, by radio, television, motion pictures, books and outdoor advertising, he has with gentle insistence reiterated his text and his theme.

In radio, there are the weekly Family Theatre dramas, going out over some 800 stations, reaching an estimated four million people. There are the special seasonal broadcasts, especially the Joyful Hour at Christmas and the Triumphant Hour at Easter, tremendously impressive presentations which have won numerous awards.

These last two programs within the last few years have also been televised, and met with equally high praise in this medium. *Hill Number One*, a televised drama which, from the sufferings of a group of soldiers in Korea, made the point that only Calvary could explain Korea — or any other war, won raves from both *Billboard* and *Variety*. Besides these and other ventures into the dramatic field, Family Theatre sponsors a special television series called "Inspiration Please," which consists of one-minute filmed spots for use by local stations on sign-offs and station breaks.

In the field of motion pictures, Family Theatre offers *The Road to Peace*, a twenty-minute documentary starring Bing Crosby and Ann Blyth, and available for showing by interest-

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ed groups.

In the remaining two communication fields. Father Peyton himself has authored two books which have had wide circulation, and his group has moved into the field of outdoor advertising with billboards up and down the land exhibiting the theme: "The family that prays together stays together."

By these means, and by personally conducted rosary crusades (on which, it is said, some 8 million pledges of the family rosary have been received), Father Peyton has without doubt been the agent under God of incalculable good. In our day the institution of the family needs shoring up as never before; perhaps far more than the world realizes, the disintegration of the family is the root cause of the tension and unrest and spirit of rebellion against God's laws which characterize our generation. God helps man in proportion to the extent man is willing to ask God for help. If the family is to be helped, it must ask for help. In this sense Father Peyton's motto expresses an enduring and a most important truth: the family that prays together, stays together.

Fame and Fortune

Fame and fortune are dangerous things.

There are the cases of Frank Sinatra, Joe Di Maggio, June Haver and now Steve Allen, all of whom were Catholics in their simpler and more uncluttered days, but who have given up their birthright for a mess of passion. Honors and money were in part responsible for clogging the channels through which God's grace generally pursues its path.

May God have mercy upon them and lead them back to their Father's house before they perish from spiritual

starvation. They are in a strange country, and the husks that they are eating are not the food calculated to give them the strength necessary for the hard journey to heaven that lies ahead of them.

The tragic failure of the lives of these celebrated people emphasizes the danger that accompanies the possession of and attachment to this world's goods. Possibly they never would have fallen had they not been accustomed to the comfortable and luxurious things of life.

Money and fame have a way of making a person self-sufficient, so that God is not necessary, God need not be depended upon. Money and fame can take the place of God. Money and fame can become god.

A very important part of the program of true Christian living is penance and mortification. But penance and mortification are most difficult to practice if one is constantly chased by autograph-seekers, flatterers and reporters from newspapers and movie magazines. Penance and mortification are even more difficult if one has the means to buy the choicest foods, the most expensive clothes and the most palatial home. Giving in to oneself in things not sinful but in a sense un-Christian becomes a habit. Then, when a great temptation comes along, there is no power of resistance. The fall is not due so much to the love affair that is its proximate occasion as to the years of having the best of everything.

People who are blessed with poverty, by which we mean enough of this world's goods to live in frugal comfort, and who go through life unknown outside of their family and their own small circle of friends, should thank God that in His goodness He has preserved them from a danger that has caused the downfall of so many others.



Liguoriana



EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

Selected and Edited by John Schaefer

THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER IV (Continued)

CHARITY IS NOT PRETENTIOUS

It is not enough to know what lukewarmness or tepidity is. We must employ the means to cast it off and to walk in the path of perfection. Let me list here five means which must be employed.

Desire of Perfection

The first of these means is the desire of perfection. Pious desires are the wings which lift us up from earth. He who has a sincere desire of perfection will not fail to advance continually toward it; and thus advancing, he must finally arrive at his goal. But one who does not desire perfection will always go backwards, and always find himself more imperfect than before. It was St. Augustine who popularized this axiom of the spiritual life: "Not to go forward in the way of God is to go backward."

Those who say that "God does not wish us all to be saints" make a serious mistake. For St. Paul says: "This is the will of God, your sanctification." God wishes all to be saints, each according to his state of life: the religious as a religious; the secular as a secular; the priest as a priest; the married as married; the man of business as a man of business; the soldier as a soldier; and so on, of every other state of life.

My great patroness, St. Teresa, gives us a beautiful instruction on this subject. "Let us enlarge our thoughts," she says. "We must beware of having poor desires. Rather, we must put our

confidence in God, that, by forcing ourselves continually onwards, we may by degrees arrive at the goal which so many saints have attained."

In confirmation of this she quoted from her own experience. She was endowed with such a spirit of generosity that on one occasion she practically issued a challenge to the saints of heaven. She said to Our Lord that if she were to behold others in paradise enjoying Him more than herself, she would not care; but were she to behold any one loving Him more than she, she knew not how she could endure it.

Not even past sins can prove a hindrance to our becoming saints. St. Paul writes: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good." An ancient commentary adds to these words of the apostle, "even sins." Even past sins can contribute to our sanctification. For the recollection of them keeps us more humble and more grateful. After so many outrages against God, what a humbling experience to behold the favors which He lavishes upon us! Of myself, the sinner should say, I am nothing; I deserve nothing but hell; but I have to deal with a God of infinite bounty, Who has promised to listen to all who pray to Him.

When our desires are good, we must take courage, and, trusting in God, endeavor to execute them. If at any time we should encounter any obsta-

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cle to our spiritual progress, let us confide ourselves quietly to the will of God. For God's will must be preferred to every good desire of our own. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi would rather have been deprived of all perfection than to possess it without the will of God.

Resolution

The second means of striving for perfection is the resolve to belong wholly to God. Many are called to perfection; they are urged to it by grace and conceive a strong desire for it. But because they never really resolve to acquire it, they live and die in their tepid and imperfect way of life. How many souls feed themselves on desires alone, but never take a step in the way of God! It is of such desires that the wise man speaks; "Desires kill the slothful." The slothful man is ever desiring, but never resolving to take the means adapted to his state of life to become a saint.

Such desires do more harm than good, for the soul feasts itself upon them, and, meanwhile, goes on living a life of imperfection. St. Francis de Sales passes the following judgment on such persons: "I do not approve of a person who, while engaged in some duty or vocation, stops to sigh for some other kind of life or for other exercises of piety. For they are incompatible with his actual position and his present state of life. They merely serve to dissipate his attention and make him careless in his necessary duties."

The first resolution must be to die rather than to commit any deliberate sin, no matter how small it may be. It is true that all our efforts, without the divine assistance, cannot enable us to overcome temptations. But God wishes us to do our part, to do violence to ourselves. For He will then

supply us with grace, aid our weakness and enable us to gain the victory. Such a resolution removes every obstacle from our path, and assures us of being in the grace of God.

This is what is meant by possessing a "delicate conscience." Observe, however, that it is one thing to possess a "delicate conscience" and quite another to have a "scrupulous conscience." For it is necessary to have a delicate conscience to become a saint. But to be scrupulous is a defect and does harm. For this reason we must obey our directors and rise above our scruples, for they are nothing but vain and unreasonable fears.

It is necessary, therefore, to resolve on choosing the best: not only what is agreeable to God, but what is *most* agreeable to Him. St. Andrew Avellini even made a vow to advance daily in perfection. It is not necessary for every one who wishes to become a saint to make it a matter of a vow. But he must strive every day to take some steps toward perfection.

And we must begin quickly and not wait until tomorrow. Who knows whether we shall find time later! In the next life there is no more time to work, nor free-will to merit, nor prudence to do well, nor wisdom or experience to take good counsel, for after death what is done is done.

David said: "And I said, now have I begun." In a similar vein St. Charles Borromeo exclaimed: "Today I begin to serve God." We should act in the same manner, as though we had previously done no good whatsoever. For, indeed, all that we do for God is nothing, since we are bound to do it. Let us, therefore, begin each day with a fresh resolve to belong to God. And let us not pause to observe what or how others are doing.



Conducted by Thomas Tobin

CATHOLIC AUTHOR OF THE MONTH

Fulton Oursler, 1893-1952

CATHOLIC JOURNALIST

I. Life

Charles Fulton, the son of William and Lillian Phillips Oursler, was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 22, 1893. He was educated in the public schools of his native city. After two years in college as a law student he joined the staff of the *Baltimore American* as a reporter and from 1912 until 1918 Oursler was music and dramatic critic for the same paper. In 1920 he came to New York with the first of a series of editorial positions. During the years 1931 to 1942 Oursler was editor-in-chief of the *Macfadden Publications* which included the old *Liberty* and ten other magazines with a circulation of sixteen million a month. In 1944 he became senior editor of the *Reader's Digest*, a position he held until his death.

Fulton Oursler was a convert to the Church from the Baptist religion and did very much by his pen to spread the cause of the Church he loved. In 1925 he married Grace Perkins, an author and actress. Three children were born to Oursler's first marriage and one child to his second marriage. Fulton Oursler was one of the popular lay speakers on the Catholic Hour. He died on May 24, 1952, and the world of letters lost a prolific writer and the Catholic Church a zealous son.

II. Writings:

There is scarcely a living American who

at least occasionally takes up a magazine or a book, who has not come across some of Oursler's writings. His magazine articles number in the thousands and his books reach a total of thirty-eight. He is the author of ten novels, of which *Three Things We Can Believe In* is the latest. Many detective story fans will be surprised to learn that Anthony Abbot was a pen name of Oursler. His knowledge of crime and its detection was so great that he delivered a series of lectures before the National Academy of the F.B.I. Four plays and many movie scenarios also came from his talented pen.

It was with his conversion that Oursler entered upon his specific religious work. *Father Flanagan of Boy's Town* with Will Oursler still remains the popular biography of the great friend of boys. *The Greatest Faith Ever Known* and *The Greatest Book Ever Written* are two of his popular Biblical books.

III. The Book:

The Greatest Story Ever Told is a popular life of Christ based upon the four Gospels. It presents in a vivid way the person of Christ in the midst of His times and His work. It was so popular that it remained on the best seller lists for months and was serialized in many newspapers. It is a good introduction to Oursler, the instructive and inspirational author.

JANUARY BOOK REVIEWS

LITURGICAL BOOKS

Catholic Liturgy. By Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B. 300 pp. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Co. \$3.50.

Companion to the Missal. By Sister M. Cecilia, O.S.B. 456 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Co. \$3.75.

Christ Acts Through Sacraments. By A. M. Roguet, O.P. Translated by Carisbrooke Dominicans. 162 pp. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press. \$2.00.

Evening Mass. By Gerald Ellard, S.J. 90 pp. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press. \$2.00.

Liturgical Catechism on the Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy. 110 pp. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Catholic Exarchate. \$2.00.

A Brief History of Liturgy. By Doctor Theodore Klauser. 33 pp. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press. \$.25.

Sunday Manners. 24 pp. St. Paul, Minn.: Catechetical Guild. \$.25.

Dom Gaspar Lefebvre was one of the early leaders in the Liturgical Revival and his book, *Catholic Liturgy*, played an important role in the awakening of the faithful to the beauty and power of the Liturgy. This book has been revised thirty years after its first appearance in 1924. The chapters of the book reveal a thorough treatment of the essential phases of the Liturgy. *Catholic Liturgy* might be called a summa of the Liturgy and is an excellent introduction to the Liturgy for the layman.

Companion to the Missal for Sundays and Principal Feasts, by Sister M. Cecilia, is a valuable aid for those who use the Sunday Missal. The purpose of the book is to make the richness of the Mass understandable to all. After a few brief introductory chapters on the meaning of the Mass the book devotes the remaining pages to the explanation of the texts of the Sunday Masses and the principal feasts. A valuable book to be used in a meditative manner before one attends Mass.

Father A. M. Roguet, the learned Dominican, is one of the leaders of the Liturgical revival in contemporary France. His first book, *Holy Mass: Approaches to the Mystery*, has already revealed the author as a priest of deep learning and great expository ability. The present book, *Christ Acts Through Sacraments*, is a collection of various lectures given under different circumstances. The three sections of the book discuss: 1. The Nature of the Sacraments; 2. The Seven Sacraments; 3. Notes on Sacramental Spirituality. This profound and yet simple presentation will bring souls closer to Christ in the sacraments through a deeper knowledge and love of the sacramental Christ.

Liturgical Catechism on the Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy is an explanation of the Liturgy of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite. With the aid of charts, sketches, questions, problems and tests, this book is a popular exposition of the structure of the Church, the arrangement of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Divine Office, the Priesthood and the Liturgical Books. It will interest those who desire to know more about the different rites in the Church. It would serve, also, as a fine model for a similar book on the Latin rite.

A Brief History of the Liturgy is a pamphlet in the Popular Liturgical Library series. The scientific and popular presentation make this pamphlet of universal appeal and utility.

Sunday Manners is the latest book of "baby pictures" with captions about Catholic situations. The present one, as its title indicates, is on the conduct of people at Sunday Mass. The pictures and the captions are excellent. I am sure that readers will recognize some of their friends and possibly even themselves in the pictures.

CONVERT STORIES

These Came Home. Edited by Gilbert L. Oddo, Ph.D. 179 pp. Milwaukee, Wis.:

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Bruce Publishing Co. \$3.00.

The personal accounts of converts' paths to Rome are always interesting and instructive. The editor gathered the stories of fifteen modern day converts in an effort to present to the non-Catholic the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church. The backgrounds of the converts range from the ministry to a musical comedy star, but for all of them the Catholic Church is home. The lay reader will be interested to learn that fourteen of the fifteen converts found their vocation in the world and not in the convent. The converts are not famous people whose conversions made the secular or even the religious press, but ordinary people, men and women, who found their way home.

STAR OF OKLAHOMA

Never Alone. By Joan Roberts. 204 pp. New York, N. Y.: McMullen Books, Inc. \$3.00.

It is good to know that the Laurie of the original "Oklahoma" cast was Joan Roberts, a Catholic girl. *Never Alone* is the personal story of Joan Roberts, her family and her career as an actress and singer. Readers will not easily forget the Irish grandfather who trained Joan for a dancing career in his own home-made gymnasium. The hard work, lucky breaks and prayer that combined to help Miss Roberts to the top are well told. The one big impression left with the reader is of the fine and practical Catholic faith that doesn't allow Joan to compromise with her principles in her chosen career. *Never Alone* is delightful reading for all interested in a behind the scenes view of the theatre.

WORTHWHILE CALENDAR

1955 Christian Life Calendar. By Rev. Gabriel Hafford and Rev. George Kolanda. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisc. \$1.00.

There are two things about this calendar that will make it appeal to many. The first

is the fact that it gives a complete guide for the use of the missal in every day's Mass. All who attend Mass daily or frequently, and who use an English missal, will need the directions set down for each day—what Mass is to be said, what commemorations are to be recited, whether there is a *Gloria* and *Credo*, etc.

The other appealing feature of the calendar is the pointed little inspirational message presented for each day, keyed either to the saint's life being celebrated or the season of the year. Of course the calendar also has full instructions regarding holy days, fast and abstinence days, etc.

FULTON OURSLER

Lights Along the Shore. By Fulton Oursler. 348 pp. Garden City, N. Y.: Hanover House. \$2.95.

This posthumous collection of 41 inspirational stories written by Fulton Oursler has been selected by his family as the most representative of the hundreds of articles and stories from his pen. None of these have ever been published in book form. The stories are all in the familiar Oursler style that instructs and inspires. The first story, *A String of Blue Beads*, has much of the poignancy that is found in O. Henry's, *Gift of the Magi*. Oursler had the journalist's gift of collecting facts and the religious man's ability to inspire. His family has added personal notes to many of the stories that add light on the circumstances of their origin. A book to dip into from time to time. Ideal as a bedside volume.

PRAYER BOOK

Prayer Book for Men. Edited by a Redemptorist Father. 72 pp. Dublin, Ireland: Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

From Ireland comes this very handy and practical *Prayer Book for Men*. It has short prayers for the morning and evening, prayers at Mass, preparation for confession and Holy Communion. Brief and to the point, it will appeal to men.

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BEST SELLERS

I. *Suitable for general reading:*

Madam!, My Eight Years of Adventure
with the Congo Pigmies—*Putnam*
To Hidden Depths—*Tailleiz*
The Captain Called It Mutiny—
Van de Water
Stephen R. Mallory, Confederate Navy
Chief—*Durkin*
Light Armour—*Armour*
Honey, I'm Home—*Nickles*
Grin and Bear It—*Lichty*
Good Morning, Miss Dove—*Patton*
The Fifth Miracle—*Cowen*
The Silver Spade—*Bolton*
Annie Oakley of the Wild West—
Havighurst
Salazar in Portugal—*Garnier*
The Stars at Noon—*Cochran*
Spies for the Blue and Gray—*Kane*
Tante Marie's French Pastry—*Turgeon*
The Enormous Turtle—*Madden*
The Benevent Treasure—*Wentworth*

II. *Suitable only for adults:*

A. *Because of advanced style and contents:*

The Ramayana—*Menen*
Launcelot, My Brother—*Roberts*
Speak to Me, Brother—*Downes*
The Age of Conformity—*Valentine*
Father's Footsteps—*Runyon*
The Escape of Socrates—*Pick*
The Cheerful Captive—*Cooper*
Joan of Arc—*Fabre*
Stormy Ben Cutler—*Holzman*
Madame de—*De Vilmorin*
The Art of Eating—*Fisher*
The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley—
McGinley
Inland Passage—*Coxe*
The Silver Chalice—*Costain*
The Strange Brigade—*Jennings*
The Hidden Flower—*Buck*
The Wall—*Hersey*

Pleasant Valley—*Bromfield*
A Handful of Silver—*Canning*
The Rainbow Bridge—*Cushing*
Margin of Error—*Borden*
The Poetic Drama of Paul Claudel—
Chiari
Cry Murder—*Rutledge*
No Man's Street—*Nichols*
Coffin for Christopher—*Ames*
The Devil Threw Dice—*Dean*
Another Morgue Heard From—*Davis*
The Good Trail—*Geagan*

B. *Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:*

Katherine—*Seton*
Bride of the Conqueror—*Spence*
American Captain—*Marshall*
Blaze of the Sun—*Houghron*
The Crazy Doctor—*Van der Lugt*
Angels and Spaceships—*Brown*
The View from Pompey's Head—*Basso*
Soldier of Fortune—*Gann*
Tactical Exercise—*Waugh*
High Water—*Bissell*
The Dancing Bear—*Faviell*
The Five Seasons—*Eska*
The Eddie Chapman Story—*Owen*
The Cup of Fury—*Felsen*

III. *Permissible for the discriminating reader:*

The Invisible Writing—*Koestler*
Acquainted with the Night—*Boll*
From Pampas to Hedgerows and Downs
—*Haymaker*
Lights Along the Shore—*Oursler*

IV. *Not recommended to any reader:*

The Devil—*Papini*
Bugles West—*Gruber*
Love and Money—*Caldwell*
Moonscape—*Waltari*
Rap Sheet: My Life Story—*Audett*

Those who have no access to a bookstore may order any book reviewed or mentioned in THE LIGUORIAN from The Liguorian Pamphlet Office, Liguori, Missouri.



Lucid Intervals

"I need your advice," a patient told a psychiatrist, "because I have developed the habit of making frequent long-distance telephone calls to myself."

"Making long-distance calls to yourself sounds like a rather expensive habit," said the psychiatrist.

"It doesn't cost me a cent," the patient replied. "I always reverse the charges."

A motorist on his way through mountain country had car trouble. He spent the night in a farm house. Next morning while eating breakfast with the family he was astonished to find himself very popular with a small pig which kept nuzzling against his legs affectionately.

"Seems your pig likes me," said the man.

"Well," said the farmer, "taint that. It's jest that you're a-using his bowl for your cereal, mister."

A Scotchman and an Irishman were arguing as to the merits of their families. The Scotchman had the floor first.

"I tell ye, laddie, I'm sprung from the best stock in the world—from the stock in the kings of Scotland. I've got royal blood in my veins. An' what stock are you sprung from?"

"I come from the Caseys," said the Irishman simply. "They niver sprung from nobody—they sprung at 'em!"

Five-year-old William went to a party in a brand new suit. When he came home his mother was horrified to see large holes cut in the suit with scissors.

"What did you do to your pretty suit?" she gasped.

"Oh, we decided to play grocery store," explained William, "and I was a piece of Swiss cheese."

Grandma was giving young Eleanor some advice.

"You mustn't be discouraged," she said. "In this world there's a man for every girl and a girl for every man. You can't complain about an arrangement like that."

"I'm not complaining about it," answered Eleanor. "I just want to get in on the deal."

A pilot developed engine trouble and had to bail out. As he was floating down he met an old woman going up.

"Did you see a plane going down?" asked the pilot.

"No," replied the old lady. "Did you see a gas stove going up?"

The two ushers had just placed the Sunday collection in the pastor's study.

"Not a bad collection today," remarked one.

"But not so good either," replied the other, "when you consider that it's all deductible."

The two elderly spinsters appeared at the ticket window of the local football stadium and asked for tickets for the game scheduled the following Saturday afternoon.

"Have you any special location in mind?" asked the ticket seller.

They whispered together for a moment, and then one said: "We'd like them where there isn't any draft, please."

Jimmy: "Father, are caterpillars good to eat?"

Father: "Don't talk about such things at the dinner table. We'll discuss that later."

Jimmy: (A short time later) "Never mind, father. That caterpillar was on your salad, but he's all gone now."

Amongst Ourselves

A happy new year to all our readers, with a special nod to the thousands of new ones who were given a subscription to THE LIGUORIAN for Christmas. They will find, as all old readers know, that at times we take quite a beating from those who disagree with our views of what is Christian and what is not. The year 1954 was an especially rugged one, chiefly because of articles that were published on prejudice against Negroes, and on the place of unions in the scheme of social justice. Yet we can honestly say that we welcome dissenting letters from readers, and consider carefully every argument or fact that is presented to disprove or invalidate something we have said. We are also, (need it be added?) deeply grateful to the thousands who write a letter, long or short, to tell us how they have been helped by a certain article, or by THE LIGUORIAN as a whole.

Perhaps a word about the editors of THE LIGUORIAN is in order here. Most of the violently disagreeing letters we receive from readers state directly or assume that the writers of articles in THE LIGUORIAN are out of touch with the world, don't know what is going on, are hermits hidden away in a woods with no practical contacts with the problems of men and women

in everyday life, or know nothing except what they read in books. In answer to that let us state that all the active editors of THE LIGUORIAN, besides having taken the full training required of Redemptorists, have taken post graduate studies in reputable universities; all have travelled extensively throughout America, and most of them abroad, on priestly business of one sort or another; all have kept in touch, and still keep in touch, with the problems of all classes of Americans by preaching retreats, missions, by discussing current problems with fellow-priests, leading laymen and women, etc. All this is no guarantee against their making mistakes, or needing to be corrected on a point of fact once in a while. But it gives us a chance to see things and to know things sometimes unknown to letter-writers who have rarely moved from the city in which they face a problem. We do want to hear about the problems of individuals, and about facts we may have missed in our studies or travels, and shall always try to answer them, first, from the uncompromising viewpoint of the teachings of Christ, and second, against the background of the experience that had very probably brought the same problem to our attention before.

IT IS EASY . . .

to determine the date when your subscription to THE LIGUORIAN expires. Look at the address stencilled on the back cover of one of your copies. If the numbers at the end of the first line read "7-54," your subscription began with the 7th month of 1953, and the last issue you are entitled to receive is that of June, 1954.

It saves us time and money if you renew promptly, or before your subscription expires. Just cut the stencilled address from the back cover and send it in with renewal payment. Be sure, too, to cut this address from one of your copies and send it in when requesting a change of address. We are charged extra postage for every copy sent to a wrong address after you have moved.

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